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FARE TO MIDLANDS

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The only road to Honey Hollow.

FARE TO MIDLANDS

Forgotten Towns of Central New Jersey

By HENRY CHARLTON BECK



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FOR SUSAN ISABEL:

who wouldn't wait for it!

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Photographs appearing in this book are those of Tyler Fogg, Alden T. Cottrell, William J. Moore and the author.

The map showing the Forgotten Towns and their modern successors was prepared by Robeson Lea Perot, of Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa.

FOREWORD

(A Letter Addressed to Adrian Ely Mount)

"There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead loves draw thither,
And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs."

—SWINBURNE

DEAR ADRIAN:

That day we started, hopefully believing that many of our journeys would be together, the sun said that Spring had come but a chill wind, sailing dark-trimmed clouds across the blue, reminded us that March was still at hand. Now, as we pause as if for second breath, the snow of a second winter lies upon the ground, for all the warm days that preceded it, and it seems impossible that so many months have sped, you but a few miles away in your little office of *The Keyport Weekly* just as we found you that Saturday, as we rummaged about the hills and valleys of the midlands. Anyone but you might conclude that we had purposely avoided Keyport and Matawan, that we had been scarcely appreciative of your help and kindly criticism. Somehow, one thing led to another, as you will see, and there were too few days, no time for making plans. Now, having had you and your family trees in mind for so long, we have come to the end of a year, and another book, only to discover that we can't talk to you about it, that you have fled to Michigan.

The main point is, then, to let you know that we did try to see you, that we did want to talk matters over, if not in your New Jersey, then in ours, here at the Guard House. That day we started we had your letters among the old books in the car, to prove that we counted on it. The winter had been

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mild, wolf in sheep's clothing, a creature which had masqueraded so long that when it threw aside its disguise, no one took it seriously, no more seriously than we took the squirrels here at the window, busily hoarding leaves and nuts at the top of their private maple, days ago. The older natives said there had been no Winter at all, and perhaps they were right. For, as we took our way along the old Monmouth Road, wondering if we'd come upon you at the next turn, over the hills that lie beyond, we saw the snow fences, stretched where experts decided the drifts would pile up. Winter must have had its own recession and, as a result, snow fences, in greater number than ever, had made themselves foolish in gaunt idleness for six long months.

We took the Monmouth Road that day, as we did time and again, because it had led, already, to unexpected discoveries. Known also as the Court House Road, because it connects Mount Holly and Freehold by the shortest possible distance of a straight line, it seemed to loan itself well to purposes of a survey. Now the road serves New Jersey as a county line but there was a time, you remember, when counties hadn't been divided as they are now, to make more counties than there were in the old days. When Burlington County bordered the Delaware from Pennsauken Creek to a point above Trenton, following Keith's line of 1687 to Little Egg Harbor and the sea, the road cut up and across it to Monmouth, before it was Freehold, seat of justice in Monmouth County. There was no Ocean County then and Monmouth owned a coast that bordered on Raritan Bay, Sandy Hook Bay, rounded Sandy Hook itself and then extended down the coast to where the Keith and Lawrence line of 1743 met near Tuckerton, once a port of entry with its own little customhouse.

It may be that the Monmouth Road lost something when it became a county line in the readjustment, Adrian. Certainly when we first stumbled on it a few years ago, it was nothing to boast about. There were stretches that told something of better days but there were others where, on a narrow, deep-rutted wagon track, we had difficulty getting through. When

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first we went to Prospertown to learn of its broken dreams of oil, it was hard to believe that the roadway had ever served fine coaches or that this was the highway along which soldiers made their march to take part in the Battle of Monmouth. Relief labor changed that and much of the old road is far better than ever it was.

That first day we came up, it was our plan to observe a little of the country before talking to people about it. The difficulty is, as you know, that after one moves along the principal highways over a period of years, seeing something of the towns placed importantly on modern maps, he is likely to assume that he knows nearly everything about the area. Naturally that is a mistaken notion. Many have found that by avoiding the uncertain paths or roadways lacking in tar or macadam they have cheated themselves from knowing the delights that lie at their doorsteps. So, in spite of mud, ruts and freakish weather, we set out along the Monmouth Road.

On the first journey we went back to what's left of the mill at Prospertown, turning along the road that leads, eventually, to Hornerstown and Jacobstown. Finley's map of New Jersey, made for Thomas Gordon's *Gazetteer* but lacking in most of the volumes found in the shops or on forgotten shelves, was published in 1834, and shows a road coming over from Allentown, through Hornerstown, crossing the Monmouth Road at Prospertown and passing through a village called Goshen, turning slightly southeast and joining the old shore road below Butcher's Forge. We had always wondered about Goshen for it is a name no longer carried on modern maps. There is a Goshen, of course, in Cape May County and we concluded that confusion of mail probably had eliminated one.

We pushed through to Collier's Mill, which you'll remember us writing about. When we were there several years before, Ivins Grant told us all about the mill and its lively days, showed us the cobwebby store and related how "Eph" Empson, the proprietor of the domain, had loved horses, had built his own race-track and finally, had been hurled to his death

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by a spirited colt. The road isn't as obvious as once it was and the race-track has all but disappeared. Around the rim of the lake, now used for growing cranberries even more extensively than when we were there before, are cottages of week-end folk who prefer the tang of cedar water to that of salt air. It was odd to find Ivins Grant, in the midst of so much change, just as we had seen him last, white-whiskered, genial, and chopping wood.

He remembered us, Adrian. In fact he had something nice to say about his being remembered in a book. We told him we were still moving about among the old towns and asked him about Goshen. "Goshen?" he repeated. "Why, that's Cassville now. First it was Downsville—called for some early settlers, about 1815, I believe. Then it was Goshen for years."

Ivins was right about that. But it was Mrs. Allen, down at the store in Cassville, who put us to rights. If it was Downsville in 1815, it was Goshen between then and 1844, she said, for that was when they named the crossroads village for General Lewis Cass, of Illinois, who had been a candidate for President. That was the same year, moreover, she revealed, when Jackson Township was set off in honor of General Andrew Jackson. "Although some say it was for the proprietor of Jackson's Mills," she admitted.

The whole trouble is, Adrian, that just about the time you get to thinking that the village you're in was much as it was from the beginning, you run across somebody like Mrs. Allen who will tell you that they've moved things about, cut a house in half and distributed its parts, just the way they've done in Cassville. The Allen store formerly stood on the other side of the road and part of it is the house where James Allen lived and the other where Harry Grover lived when Mrs. Allen spoke of it. For that matter, the store's been in the family over a hundred years, so everything hasn't changed after all. But it's a long time since those first days when John Webb, whom Mrs. Allen solemnly proclaims the originator of cranberries, lived at Webbville, not far away, gathering vines in the swamps and planting them with the aid of a wooden leg.

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There was all that and there ought to be a lot more. In fact, after you've gone from a place, concluding that there isn't any more of all that should be written down before those who remember are gone, you suddenly discover that you've missed something important. That's the way it was with Barnegat and Crosswicks, as you will see. As for Mrs. Allen, she was really very friendly but what we learned from her came secondhand. She sent us to see Mrs. Hernberg, the County helping-teacher, to whom she had given her recollections for use in the schools. But even so, luck was with us there, for in so many places people refuse to disclose the history you know they remember while others, too anxious to be heard, tell you things that others find fault with later—and you, not they, get the blame.

So, in that first journey and many of the others, the Monmouth Road loomed as the gateway to a new kind of New Jersey, far different in its topography from the southern end of the State but equally as fascinating in its forgotten towns and unremembered folklore. You know well enough that Blue Ball, below Freehold, has become Adelphia, that Browns' Point is Keyport, and Matawan, once New Aberdeen, was later Middletown Point, as it is shown on the map of 1834. Colt's Neck had nothing at all to do with a horse and originally was either Coll's or Cole's Neck. Holmdel was Baptist-town although on the older maps both names are given—and feeling that there must be a story behind all that, we moved off in your direction. And what happened? We found so much at every turn that—now we must write you a letter. You felt, they said, that you must chuck the job that once we thought we'd like so much.

But the whole of Middle New Jersey is bound together by its pioneers and its pioneer days, as those first journeys proved. And since we began, covering more than five thousand miles on Sundays and days off, in the midst of a news-room routine, we found each "hidden" town a challenge, every uncertain road an adventure. We should have known, Adrian, that it would be something on that order, from our experiences

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among the Forgotten Towns of Southern New Jersey. But even as we lingered that first day, on Emley's Hill, hoping that we would get up to see you, we were not prepared for all the friendliness, all the cordial help that was to be ours.

Perhaps you will say that Emley's Hill is an unlikely illustration, that here is a lost corner without relationship to all the rest. This, you may feel, is mere pleasantry on our part and that, at best, Emley's Hill could be used only for contrast. No, that is wrong. There are as many places in the midlands, surely, as there were in Southern New Jersey, where the very lack of color is eloquent, where a broken mill, a few cellar holes or an abandoned house will tell the story of the elusive past. As for the hill with the little church on the top of it, the Emleys arrived on *The Shield* at Burlington, you know, but surely one of the founders of New Aberdeen, Patrick Emly, was their kin. This Methodist Church, erected in 1790, burned and rebuilt in 1807 and replaced by the present structure in 1835, is now a memorial to Daniel Havens.

The little white church and its tower are seen from far away but the earliest days lie buried obscurely in the cemetery behind it. The cemetery is divided in two, one up-to-date and regularly cared for and the other almost as forgotten as its bones. On our journey there we saw that the horse sheds were falling apart and that the caretaker, whoever he was, had difficulty with his spelling: On the barrow in the tool-house was inscribed, "Emlays Hill Cemetary." Scattered about were fragments of home-kilned brick and discarded ironstone. Across the deep-set road from the church was an abandoned farmhouse, its windows barred effectively by sheets of corrugated metal. There were no other houses in this wide panorama of rolling country.

Many of the Emleys lie buried here, among them Wesley, 1810; Samuel, 1811; Meribah, widow of Samuel, 1842. Here, too, in case you are interested for purposes of genealogy, are Harkers, Horners, Dansers and Sills. Perhaps a little presumptuous is the rhyme chosen by one of the Emleys for her stone:

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"How happy every child of grace
Who knows her sins forgiven;
This earth, she cries, is not my place—
I seek my place in heaven!"

Although William Emley's death is proclaimed as having occurred in 1817, that of Mary, his relict, is given as 1840. Aaron, their son, died in 1843, Eunice in 1836 and Harriett in 1849. In fact, there are few in the graveyard whose age was much more than fifty. Rhoda Emley, however, died in 1876, and since she was eighty-five, complains from her stone:

"Sickness sore long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain;
Till death did cease and God did please
To ease me of my pain."

The fence at the top of the hill beside the road must have been erected long after some of the graves were placed, for that of Mary Henderson, who died in 1839, got barely inside the enclosure. And it was rather strange, we thought, that some of the first robins of a Spring not yet arrived came to rest among many stones of the Robbins family while we were there. From Emley's Hill we returned to the Monmouth Road. "About time," we can hear you say.

Jacobstown is on the older maps as Jacob's Town and is typical of the section. The roads, as they are today, as well as the U.T., which you will be pleased to know we've revived for you, offer confusion at first and one concludes that Hornerstown, once Horner's Town, may have moved. At the end of the road that approaches from Red Valley, which no other than your nephew told us was once called Glory Hole, coming to an abrupt halt at the hard-surfaced route to Allentown, there is an old brick school, ingeniously held together by means of a convenient tree and a rope—and here it was, Mr. Hendrickson, the schoolmaster, declared, that the Mormons held their meetings in the vicinity.

We were tempted to linger at Old Tennent, as we always are when we go by, but that day we pushed on, still toward

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your towns, you see. The urge to move and a sense of direction were not enough, however. A new challenge loomed across the hill. Apparently there was no road, no public way, at least, to the tiny burying ground perched at its top. There were monuments of a size easily seen from a distance, with what appeared to be a solitary little summerhouse. We wondered if this was, or was near, the Doyle farm which had yielded stones for Tennent. Almost before we knew, and without finding a way to the mount—not you, in this case, Adrian,—sunset came.

Shortly after that we made another try. We had proceeded up the Tennent Road toward Middletown when we turned toward the right, over Marlboro way, from a corner where a farmhouse proclaims itself to have been an old inn. Here we asked questions but the occupants had one stock answer to every query: "Can't say. Can't say." Finally someone admitted there must have been a tavern since a bar had been removed not so very long before. Again we turned, after a short distance, to the left, determined to investigate what appeared to be the white steeple of a church. This proved to be the old-fashioned windmill of a farmhouse so loftily situated that it can be seen for many miles in every direction. The wind must howl across the promontory, for even the windmill was braced by guy-lines.

Before we had attained the farmhouse, however, we halted abruptly on the sloping road. We had hoped to avoid cemeteries this time but, as in so many of the journeys, that was not possible. Almost entirely surrounded by orchards here, half covered by brambles and limbs cut from the trees just there, were the familiar brown tombstones of Dutch pioneers. You probably know the place well. However, when we saw that the inscription on one was "Mr. Richard Clark, Born in Scotland, Died 1733," we decided to investigate further.

In the midst of the clearing was a large monument, erected under the supervision of the Synod of New Jersey in 1899, revealing that this was the very site of the famous Old Scots Meeting House, built, according to the monument, Dec. 29,

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1706. The Meeting House was there, at least, when the Reverend John Boyd was ordained. Master Boyd lived but two years after his ordination, dying when he was twenty-nine—religious fervor cut them down young in those days, didn't it? "The ashes of the very pious Master John Boyd, pastor of the Church of Calvin, are buried here," says one of the inscriptions. On another side is a facsimile of the original epitaph, in Latin.

The cropped grass around the shaft was in marked contrast to everything else. The weeds had been cut before Winter set in, but they had been left to dry where they fell. Some of the oldest stones were obscured altogether by berry canes and thorny growths. There was some evidence of digging, large sunken holes half concealed by the undergrowth from which lilies had begun to appear. Hulsarts, Boyces, Formans, Redfords, Walls, Peacocks and Probascos are buried there in the older graves, pioneers who came from Scotland seeking religious freedom, who are, except for descendants mindful of their heritage in the neighborhood, forgotten. One stone marks the resting place of no less a personage than William Crawford, High Sheriff of Middlesex County. A double stone is that of William and Margaret Redford "who came from North Britain in 1682." Many graves have no markers at all but were located by stakes which have rotted and broken off by now.

One of the loveliest of old churches awaited us, however, where the road turns from North Marlboro toward Holmdel. This is the Reformed Dutch Church, of dark brick and covered with vines, beside which we found the first Vanderbilt graves. On the east side are Jeremiah Vanderbilt, who died in 1810, and Charity, his wife, who died in 1831. The Schencks and Schancks, of whom you have written much in your researches for ancestors and who are to be found in great numbers in Holmdel Cemetery, are also here. Here also are more Wikoffs, Hendricks and Prests, one with the name of Ginne, under the familiar skulls and angel heads.

Our visits to cemeteries were but begun. North of

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Holmdel we saw the hilltop burial place again and again but we were unable to reach it. Taking one road we felt must attain it, we were compelled to turn about in muddy ruts from a drive we discovered was private. We turned right at the next turn, as we had done on the first visit. We were still as far away as ever, perhaps symbolical of our quests to call on you again. At an abrupt turn, after climbing a formidable ridge, one of several from which we could see the lovely blue of Raritan Bay, we came upon another cluster of stones, with nothing of the far-away to lend it charm. If anything, this burial place was in the worst condition of any we had seen or were to see.

What had been a wooden fence had tumbled inward. What was left of an iron gate sagged hopelessly. Trees had crashed down on little barriers that squared off the family plots. Under the debris we managed to decipher the names of Joseph Dorsett, buried in 1741; John Vanderbilt, who died in 1765; Robert Cottrell, who died in 1811, his wife, Rachel, and also Samuel Cornell and Stephen Bailey. Once again a larger stone mocked the condition of the others: This was erected to the memory of James and Elizabeth Dorset, at the direction of Elizabeth, according to the inscription. She provided for the monument, it read, inasmuch as in 1879, at the age of one hundred and two, she was the last of the Dorsetts, or Dorsets, to reside on the property. In the Dorset plot was an early grave, that of Anne, wife of Aris Van der Belt, who died in 1758. This was the first time we had noted the early spelling of the Vanderbilt name.

Long after, when we had been to Sandy Hook, we took Alden Cottrell there, watching him react at the sight of a stone on the grave of one we thought might have been an unknown ancestor. We were thinking of you, Adrian, not because we had lost you among the tombstones, but because we had counted on this and other journeys with you, and, as you will see, we were sidetracked over and over. There is considerable consolation in the thought that although we were waylaid, repeatedly, in the Sourlands, along the Dela-

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ware and Raritan Canal, at the Hopewell that was Columbia, at Englishtown and Hamilton Square's replacement of Nottingham, as well as on old paths that demanded retracing of steps closer to home, there's a lot of ground left to cover and perhaps some of the dreams you've dreamed will come true and you'll come back for a wander or two. One town led to five, one friend to a dozen more, so that now we know that if all that should be dug up and written down before its sources are tucked away among some of those graves we have mentioned, more time than we have had must be given to the task.

We see eye to eye on the work itself, Adrian. You've been kind enough to say that, pointing out what we have since discovered, some of the historians who prefer a chronology of facts and dates in less obscure places have little patience with this sort of thing. That is why we avoid the experts where we can, as well as the storehouses of so much that is well known. It's much more fun to run across something on one's own and conclude that it's new, even at the risk of having someone say, "A few of us knew all about that, long ago." On the one hand you can have dry-as-dust records, old deeds, absolute certainty, established authorities. On the other you can choose folklore, history in the words of those who recall, or remember having heard, the old legends based on fact. There is no use taking the position that unless one is absolutely certain of every detail, he should pass blithely by.

There are some towns among those you'll read about that are not forgotten, not as forgotten, surely, as some that we have written about in the southern end of the State. Just the same, there's much about them that *is* forgotten except to a few people. Old families are modest or have died out and little-remembered scenes of yesterday are hidden away in books that are collectors' items in neglected libraries and museums or are memoirs written for small family editions. Much that we have discovered for some may be no discovery at all but we have watched the reactions of history-minded people long enough to know that the knowledge of New

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Jersey's bygoness isn't general. What we have tried to do is assemble the material in one place and thus commend the journeys to others who may find as much delight in adventures just across their own doorsills as we have. How much more thrill there would be in the study of history if those who teach it would say:

"Come along with me! Just a few miles from here we can see charcoal-burning, slag from the bog-ore furnaces, the plains and pines that yielded firewood for New York's pre-coal days, the house where the Farewell Address was written, the lighthouse once fortified by the British and their Tory allies, the countryside still as it was when folk from New England and beyond the sea treated with the Indians and pushed them back, built log schools and churches! And, if you're good, we'll take you where General Lee misbehaved—but of course we'll leave discussion of that till later on! Let's see some of the things and places we've been talking about!"

As you've gathered by this time, Adrian, there's much more to be done, more old roads to be traveled, more people to see, in the same frame of mind and with the same unrelenting purpose, believing not too gullibly but rather that than doubting. It becomes a sort of obsession, you know. You know that, perhaps, from your own work. But we hope we won't land as far away as Ann Arbor on the first bounce as a reaction to a realization of the futility of the jumpy life of the news room. Perhaps the outdoors, the love of trees and roads and sunlight, mixed up with a passion for the unexplored and uncertain in a kind of zealous veneration of decadence, act as a balance wheel, or at least a spur to go on hoping that around the next turn will be . . .

Enough of this. It is late. There will be but a few hours between now and the necessity of going out in the cold dark, watching them load the mail from the first bus and being concerned with the trivia and sensation of a day's medley of news long before you are awake. We must take that back, for we are uncertain what Michigan has done to you. Here's the book you should have had a part in and in which, for all

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you know, you helped a lot. The Old Monmouth Road opened a new land of wonder and now, where so many pioneers are forgotten, where within sight of the Pleasant Valley, the Sourlands and the Barnegat shores they loved, "dead dreams of days forsaken" fade with the dust of leaves among "strays of ruined springs," there's a field in which to work and we've continued a little further on our way.

HENRY CHARLTON BECK

Haddonfield, N. J.

FARE TO MIDLANDS

Chapter 1

NOTTINGHAM SQUARE

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

—PHILIP JAMES BAILEY

"I'VE BEEN HERE," said Walter Cubberly, "just seventy-two years. Don't ask me where I was before that for I don't know. You see, I'm seventy-two."

He was a quiet-voiced, genial little man who had walked down to the Ridgeways' to talk to us of what he remembered in old Nottingham Square. We had called to see him earlier in the evening but he had been at supper then and it was his idea to walk over for a talk while we were waiting for ours. We said something about the growing darkness and the long walk but he had laughed. "I know every inch of the village as well as anybody here unless it's Alfred Reed," he said, "and of course, he's been here about ten years longer than I."

Although we had been within touching distance of the town that had been old Nottingham for many years, we had never visited the village until a few weeks before. Our first call, as well as many other pleasant ones since then, was the result of a letter from Mrs. Ridgeway. "I wonder," she wrote, "if you are aware of Hamilton Square, the village in which we live. Four years ago I dug up a lot of data and from it wrote a dramatization in the form of a pageant and produced it right here in the Arthur Margerum Hall. It caused quite a stir and letters poured in from many of the old residents. I had so much stuff that I had a fearful task in selecting what I did use.

"My most helpful source was the diaries of Mr. Joe Harry West. He is dead but his two daughters have the diaries. They are extremely careful about them and will not permit

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them to be taken from their home but they allowed me to go there and read them and make notes.

"Hamilton Square was formerly Nottingham and Old Nottingham and at one time was a booming little place with a brick factory, a famous chair factory and so on. There was never an actual Revolutionary battle but there was lots of foraging and similar activity in the Bear Swamp and Quaker Bridge near by. I could go on and on but you may not be interested."

Interested? The postscript that Mrs. Ridgeway appended compelled us to leave off our journeys near Holmdel, once Baptist-town, and hurry to Hamilton Square. "If you would like to meet some of the old people whose reminiscences are so interesting, especially the old man who still has the town whipping post in his attic," she added, "I will be very glad to do what I can to help."

The "old man" with the town whipping post was Walter Cubberly, of course, but even as Mrs. Ridgeway wrote of it, the relic had been tossed under a wood pile by unknowing hands and lost forever. "Walter is just too excited over the prospect of a chance to tell of it all to someone who is willing to listen," a later letter said, when arrangements had been completed. "But he's horribly grieved over his precious whipping post. He has watched over it for years and recently, in some family unpleasantness, the post was tossed under the wood pile, he says. I wondered how it could acquire that position on a toss but that is that. Preserving it all these years, thinking that some day it might become a town relic, he offered to sneak over some dark night and snitch it. I told him I did not think it worth while being shot at."

First we looked to see what Mr. Gordon had to say about Nottingham in his *Gazetteer* of 1834. "Nottingham Square," read the brief entry, "village of Nottingham t-ship, Burlington co., on the road from Trenton to Allentown, 6 miles E. of the former, on a sandy plain; contains 1 Presbyterian, and 1 Baptist church, a store, a tavern, and from 8 to 12 dwellings."

That, as Mr. Joe Harry West wrote in his privately printed

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history of the village, was as accurate an estimate and description as one might expect in a *Gazetteer*, but there were more houses than that, he declared. Now the town has changed in almost every way, Trenton has spread out and come closer and even the old name, Nottingham, has been traded for Hamilton Square. And although descendants of the earliest pioneers linger in the village, no one seems to know the exact reason for the trade.

But this is only one of scores of mysteries that involve the changing of town names. Something was lost in the transition in almost every case, whether the delivery of mail was simplified or not. Surely Nottingham Square left something behind in the scramble, for there are many in Hamilton Square who talk today of a time when, perhaps, they can go back to the name that came with the first citizens from Nottingham, England, not yet ready to leave everything of the old country behind. Perhaps there was confusion between Nottingham Square and Nottingham Township but that doesn't sound too plausible. Today the name of Nottingham remains only as the name of the township.

Names of villages in the vicinity of old Nottingham have changed on every hand. Mercerville was Sandtown, Yardville was Sand Hills and Robbinsville, once Hungry Hill, was later Newtown. Gordon locates Sandtown in Nottingham Township, Burlington County, "on a sandy plain" containing "a tavern, smithery and some half-dozen dwellings." Of Sand Hills, the *Gazetteer* says "there is a tavern, and 12 or 15 dwellings here; the turnpike road, and the Camden and Amboy rail-road, run near it. The carriages from and for Trenton meet the rail-road cars here," so Sand Hills or not, there was more than the original name implied.

There was more to Nottingham, too, than Hamilton Square would indicate to the casual traveler now. We hadn't listened to Mr. Cubberly five minutes until we knew that. His mother, Mary, was born in Hamilton Square, "so I remember," he said, "everything worth knowing about. And what my mother didn't tell me, my father did, for he came from Newtown.

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That was before the mail for Newtown began going to Newtown, in Pennsylvania, and up north in New Jersey to Newton."

All the roads that Walter Cubberly knew as a boy were dirt roads. "We didn't know what a stone road was," he told us. "The Trenton and Allentown pike through here was run by a turnpike company—guess I'm the only one living of eight or ten who went to New Brunswick to fight the toll on that road. Taking toll for a road that was in the condition the turnpike was, mostly, was wrong. So one day, as a test, I drove down the road and right around the toll house without paying."

Mr. Cubberly recalled that the toll house he avoided was in charge of a Mrs. Long, who called after him and later had him arrested. "I was served with the papers," he said, "and was told I would get a call to come to the courthouse. But nothing ever happened. Soon after that we got a decision against the road."

There were two toll houses in the vicinity of Nottingham. One was about half a mile away, toward Robbinsville. The other was perhaps half a mile out of Mercerville. There was a peach orchard all around the one in charge of Mrs. Long for when Walter Cubberly defied the powers that be, he drove his horse and wagon through between the trees.

"The toll? I think it was a cent a mile for a single horse," he disclosed. "All in all, it cost three cents to go into Trenton and three cents to come out. If you had two horses, then the fare was double that, for the toll was on the horse and not the number of persons in the wagon."

For passenger transportation to Trenton, there was a coach operated by a man named Hendrickson. "He came from up Pigtown way," said Mr. Cubberly, with a grin. "Now I guess you'll want to know where Pigtown was. Well, that was up the other side of Dutch Neck—there was three or four houses there and Hendrickson lived in one of them." The coach ran on a schedule that was fairly dependable. The trip in from Nottingham required two hours and sometimes two hours and a half.



Springfield Meeting House bears the date of 1727, and seems the same as it always was, but it was once much larger. A fire has reduced its size since livelier days.



Cassville once was Goshen and before that something else, when a man named Webb planted the earliest cranberries with the aid of a wooden leg.



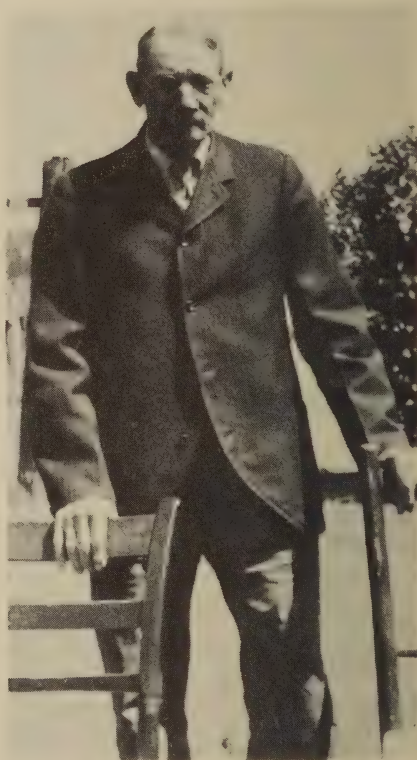
Up above Old Tennent, what was obviously an inn of long ago has lost identity among newcomers who admit there was a bar but as for the rest, they "can't say."



The Quaker Bridge is marked, so that we of today won't forget altogether that the bridge was ripped up to delay the pursuit of His Majesty's soldiers.



Walter Cubberly remembers the early Cubberlys and others of old Nottingham, now Hamilton Square. Here he is on a street named for him.



Alfred Reed remembers that beyond the days of Hamilton Square there was old Nottingham, a village that produced chairs for the countryside.

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Following up the clue to the chair factory, Mr. Cubberly said it was operated by John Appleton and his father, Joseph, before him. "John was the wispiest man you ever saw," we were told. "And he wasn't tall, either. Why, we used to say, when we were boys, 'Who's that down there fastened to the fence?' And another of us would answer, 'It's John Appleton, of course. The wind must have blowed him away!'" He was one of those fellows you had to look at twice to see him once.

"Just the same, people came from miles around to buy his chairs, nice rush-bottom chairs, some of them rockers, too. But he didn't make any money at it. I don't think he ever expected to. He got a living but he was too honest to get more than that. One of those people who'd walk a mile to pay if he owed you but not one to collect for himself. No, he never made no money. And when he died, there was nobody left who knew how to make the chairs, and his little factory closed down."

Mr. Cubberly said he remembered the brick-making in Nottingham, too. Nowadays folk who live in Hamilton Square find bricks almost everywhere a hole is dug. We were told not to think of the operations as brickyards, however.

"They made bricks out in the open, in the fields," Walter Cubberly said. "I remember the place run down the street here by old Dan Wilgus. There was just a shed where Dan and his helpers made bricks by hand. Even on the best days, if they turned out five hundred, they were doing good. Yes, I've seen 'em burning in the field many a time. Now, when folks turn up a pile of bricks down yonder, they say there must have been a house. I laugh at 'em. Many's the pile of bricks I've turned up and tossed in a hole."

There was one story we had heard about the school in Nottingham that was worth remembering and we asked Mr. Cubberly about it. Once in the old days when a teacher kept order to the rule of a hickory stick, this particular instructor in Nottingham sent the boy out to cut the switch with which he was to be chastised. He went outside willingly enough, the legend goes, returning with a cutting of sumac. The teacher realized what had happened only after a doctor ordered her

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home for two weeks with hands, arms and face swollen twice their size.

"There was a one-room school at the end of the square where the wheelwright and blacksmith shop stood—at least they stood there till they blew over a few years ago," Mr. Cubberly remembered, as if it was a genuine pleasure to restore those memories dead so long. "There was an old school before that, down where Saul's undertaker shop is now. On the average there were sixty scholars and one teacher had to look after them. Most teachers in Nottingham had a bad time of it."

No teacher in those days had an easy time of it, we replied, from all we had heard. Mr. Cubberly agreed. There was an exception, however, he said. "That was before the school was moved from down at Saul's to where it was used last. A little teacher, quite a young girl, came along and applied for the job. 'Why, we can't take you,' they told her. 'The boys'll throw you out!' 'Give me a trial,' she said. And they did. She told us her name was Hutchinson and we up and told her what we'd do. You know, she took it all out of us in a day or two. Yes, sir, she whipped us with kind words. She put her arm around our shoulders to help us when we couldn't do our sums or whatever it happened to be. Pretty soon we was wanting to put our arms around her!"

Old Walter Cubberly laughed in recollection. "Well," he concluded the story, somewhat wistfully, "she wasn't with us long. She was a right personable girl—and of course she had to go get married."

We turned to the subject of the whipping post, wondering if Walter had retrieved it. If he had tried, he made no mention of the fact.

"It was about eight feet high, at first," he said, "and perhaps eight inches square. There was an iron band around the top as I first remember it, a piece of chestnut hewn with a broad-axe. I never saw anybody whipped down there in the square but my father did. Usually the squire who gave the sentence whipped the prisoner himself."

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We told him we had assumed the whipping post must have been a relic of days of slavery. "Oh, no," he shook his head. "It was used for sentences given chicken thieving and the like. Father told me he had often seen a prisoner given so many lashes for some petty offense down there in the hotel yard."

John Cubberly had been a carpenter. "He built all the biggest houses in Nottingham," his son said proudly. "I was a trucker from the first, growing my own vegetables and then taking them to Trenton to sell."

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Old Walter said he couldn't do business with the markets. He had to be entirely on his own. Where scores of Hamilton Township homes stand today was the farm from which he produced truck for Trenton homes over fifty years ago. Joe Harry West, the wheelwright, he recalled, built him the finest wagon in the whole vicinity. That was after he had gone to his father and told him he'd "have to have a better rig." "I was doing well—making three or four dollars a day with truck," he said. "But I wanted a wagon that would hold forty to forty-five baskets. So, for a hundred and twenty-five dollars I got me the best market rig around here—held forty-two baskets inside, with an extra one on the driver's seat."

The wheelwright's forge, long abandoned, was taken away only a short time before we were there. "They've hauled lots of places and lots of people away," Walter Cubberly chuckled, looking for his hat. "But I'm still here. And if you come back and want some more, perhaps I'll have some later on, after I've done some more thinking. Thinking's the best thing I do these days."

With a little bow that must have been part of the long-ago of Nottingham, he went out into the dark.

The old name that was Hamilton Square's lingers in that of the street where we found Miss Georgie West and her sister and their seven cats. It is one of the older houses on Nottingham Way but a few steps from where their father operated his blacksmith and wheelwright shop. The house is divided in two and now Warren T. Saul has an undertaking establishment in the other half where Joe Harry's brother, Ran-

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dolph F. West, arranged the funerals of friends whose horses Joe Harry had shod and for whom he had built wagons as fine as Walter Cubberly's. Of the father of the Wests many said, "He may not have known everything but what he did know he wrote down."

Mr. West is recalled in many things in old Nottingham, his little history of the village issued in 1876, his part in the newspaper feud as to who was first in Trenton, his work as township assessor, his shop and his diaries. The diaries, however, are not known to everyone for the Misses West guard them well, as of course they should. Into his old account book he pasted the clippings of the historical sketches he wrote for the Trenton newspapers and, as we examined them, old yellow clippings and fragile manuscripts, some dated in the early 1700's, came to light.

Mr. West's history seemed more formidable than actually it was for two copies had been bound together to make the little book. "The first one," Miss Georgie explained, "is the one Father added to, as new things turned up." Sure enough, on many of the pages, were margin entries in Joe Harry's plain and painstaking hand, correcting the printed word or making an insert of new facts. "Father was writing all the time," said Miss West, smiling. "Perhaps he had to. Grandfather was married twice and so was his second wife. There were three sets of children to keep track of."

Miss Georgie chuckled as she made such asides and inevitably another cat we hadn't seen before came wandering in, to be called by his or her own full family name. Miss Georgie was rosy and ready to laugh at everything. Her sister assumed principal charge of the wandering felines, for, if each of the seven cats had nine lives, this, as you may imagine, would be a lively household.

Joe Harry West called his pamphlet, the original of which we found in an old copybook, "The History of the Village of Hamilton Square, Mercer County, New Jersey." Into it he wove excerpts of the "Minutes of Nottingham Township" from 1692 to 1710, the travels of David Brainerd, the Indian

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missionary, and historic anecdotes of Trenton and vicinity that could be uncovered at the time. Always in search of the founding date of Nottingham, Mr. West wrote into the printed title page that Nottingham Square was in existence "as early as 1776, if not earlier." He discovered that the name which must have been in use many years previously appeared officially in the minutes of the Hightstown Baptist Church in 1784.

Joe Harry's respect for the past was a part of his breeding, for the Wests are traced back through the earliest days of the colonies. There was a time when Jamesburg was called West's Turnout, or West's, and the diarist who was equally aware of present and past commented, "Those Wests were some of us." Miss Georgie, moreover, informed us that the great-granddaughter of Penelope Stout was her great-great-grandmother. "That takes some reckoning," she said, "but it's true just the same."

There was a John West who married Anne Rudyard, daughter of the noted Thomas Rudyard, according to Edwin Saltar, the latter coming from Staffordshire, England, to East Jersey, in 1682. John West came over on the ship *Blossom*, which arrived August 7, 1678. In 1693 Ann West, widow of John, desired proprietors to confirm her title to her deceased husband's lands in Somerset County. We were to hear more of the Wests and the reluctance shown by railroad conductors in adopting the new name for the station, Jamesburg, later on.

The story of Penelope Van Princis, or Van Princes, later Stout, has been written and rewritten, added to and watered down through the years and yet it remains a delightful story in all its variations. However, the place to recall it is at Hopewell, where when the first meeting house was being used, nine of the congregation of fifteen were Stouts. Second best, of course, is Sandy Hook where Penelope figured in the first shipwreck on record, in 1620. With an ancestor in Penelope, who lived to bestow her blessing on five hundred and two progeny at the age of 110, Joe Harry and the Wests have a right to boast. With history in his blood the diarist could

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scarcely ignore the call to record a past that blazed a trail, many trails, from Long Island to Middletown Township in Monmouth County and across to Hopewell and Old Nottingham.

In so many cases the families themselves know little of the way they've come and we recalled to Miss Georgie the fact that even the lovely old Christ Church, in Shrewsbury, at one of the most famous corners in all New Jersey, stood guard over many of the Monmouth Wests. How Joe Harry would have enjoyed exchanging reminiscences with some of them!

One has little difficulty in picturing him, pen in hand, reaching back into the past, recalling establishment of "The Yorkshire Tenth" which, somehow, sounds more like a regiment than like what it was, an area bounded on the South by Rancocas Creek, on the East by the Province line, on the west by the Delaware River and on the north by the "Assanpink" creek which now is spelled Assunpink. He revives a memory of "the Fly Boat *Martha*" and *The Shield* leaving Hull, the latter arriving in the Delaware off Burlington Dec. 10, 1678, discharging its passengers on the ice. These ships, Mr. West declares, brought the first pioneers of Nottingham Township.

In his newspaper battle as to who was first in Trenton, Joe Harry championed Mahlon Stacy, claiming it was Stacy who built the first mill at Trenton on the Assunpink. Stacy was one of the pioneers from Hull, along with Thomas Lambert, for whom Lamberton was named.

Nottingham Township was formed from part of the Yorkshire Tenth in 1686, including at the time all the present Hamilton Township and all of what today is Trenton south of the Assunpink. "The name of Nottingham was given the Township," wrote Mr. West, "by Isaac Watson who was from Nottingham in England." The township remained as it was from 1686 to 1842. In 1838 Mercer County was formed from parts of Burlington, Hunterdon and Middlesex Counties and in 1842 Hamilton Township was created from a greater part of Nottingham, "leaving as Nottingham all that was south of the Assanpink and south of the Canal."

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The names of Stacy, Lambert, William Embly, Ann Pharo, Caleb Wheatley and Sylvanus King were sprinkled through the early records that Mr. West examined as principals in real estate transfers, civic changes and other chief events of Nottingham's earliest days. The folk of the vicinity were Quakers, Presbyterians and Episcopalians. At Hopewell, which is referred to as Columbia, Episcopalians had settled as early as 1704 and a church was established by them in 1715. Time and again Joe Harry indicates a preference for his own facts, dismissing the estimates of the *Gazetteer* with impatience as he declares that Nottingham Square, with 25 houses and 90 inhabitants in 1848, had grown to 71 houses and 297 inhabitants by 1876.

All sources seem agreed that Hamilton Square, old Nottingham, had no important part in the Revolution. At the edge of all the excitement, a little off the beaten track even as it is today, it was often visited by foraging parties and all the varieties of war-time miscreants, but despite the dark days when tired Continentals returned home, some tempted by offers of pardon by British invaders, it made the most of little incidents which, through the years, have been given added coloring. Yet such an assumption is unfair, for a skirmish, in those days, loomed as importantly as it would today in Hamilton Square, despite our passive interest in warfare that dwarfs such encounters to a point of ridiculousness.

There is the story of Mr. Flock who, captured by a Hessian and led off down the road, became so infuriated by pricks of the bayonet, finally, that he turned on his captor, despatched him, tossed the body in the creek and staked it down to avert connection with the affair. It is likely that Mr. Flock was John Flock, for his house stood near Everett's Corner in those days. Samuel, his son, who "was a good-sized lad in 1777, lived till 1848. He said that it was about the dawning of daylight when the army began passing his father's house and that he had gone to the barn to feed the stock. His mother, hearing the tramp of men and horses and the rattling of the cannon over the frozen ground, became frightened for Samuel across

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the road. Not being able to tell friend from foe in the dim light, and watching for a break in the ranks, she made a dash between the files and found the boy safe in the barn."

The march of Washington's forces when the famous flank attack at Princeton was in the making was by way of Quaker Bridge, some distance from old Nottingham, and the spot has been marked as historically important. There is a bridge there today but the span that was used and then destroyed was an even more "primitive affair," according to Mr. West, "being a double span of beams and planks, with a row of piles to hold up the center. There were no railings at the sides."

In one of his articles Joe Harry wrote that General Alfred A. Woodhull, of Princeton, had a copy of a fragment of manuscript left by Thomas Carpenter, then quartermaster of the Salem County Militia, written in 1840, and recalling his own experiences at Quaker Bridge. The account would indicate that warfare of Revolutionary days in the neighborhood of Nottingham had its casual moments, as Samuel Flock's attention to chores of the farm in spite of the excitement would also indicate.

Carpenter and his fellow officers had gone into a house owned by a Mrs. Clark to keep warm. When the conference at the Douglass House was over, this company knew nothing of the decisions that had been made until the movement was well under way. Aroused at two in the morning, the sleepy soldiers took horse and hurried down the White Horse Road to catch up with the troops and succeeded only in connecting with the baggage train. The army had vanished along Pond Run and the Sandtown Road, taking a short cut over Quaker Bridge to avoid "the Sandtown angle." Reaching White Horse, the embarrassed officers asked for a guide to Quaker Bridge.

Carpenter's manuscript recalled that the guide offered was a girl of fifteen but we have sought in vain, as Mr. West must have done before us, to locate a family at White Horse which might, through some family legend, tell her identity. She led the soldiers through the dark woods despite the freezing cold

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and gave her life as a result, for she died of exposure shortly after the officers paused at still another house to get warm. Then, after the company pressed on to the bridge, it was discovered that Washington's rear guard had ripped it up and the stream was impassable. As the next step was being discussed the sound of cannon was heard from Princeton.

There are others in Hamilton Square today who recalled forebears who told of being sent to hide in barns or cellar holes or of hearing the battle at Princeton January 3, 1777. A cannon ball did crash through an outbuilding of Abram Eldridge, they say, but that must have been when a prowling party was going by, waging its own private war. Because there was little fear of danger or perhaps because there was an air of determined complacency, the Presbyterian Church at Nottingham was completed in 1776. Troops passed near Sandtown, time and again, and the crossing of the Delaware wasn't too far away, but the war was for the most part a matter for discussion and debate in the old hotel where William Nutt and Davis Chambers were minehosts.

Just when we were about to conclude that Nottingham folk might not have felt keenly for the cause, however, we were offered proof that the attitude toward the King's invaders was all that it should have been. It was pointed out that although the "doctrines of Wesley," as Joe Harry wrote of them, were first taught in the village in 1766, there was no Methodist Church till 1844. Surely the fact that Wesley's spokesman was Thomas Webb, captain of a British man-of-war, had something to do with that.

Strange as it may seem, there were no stores in the village prior to 1800 when Christopher Harrer set up a shop. After that, a variety of establishments located at the crossroads.

One of the yellowed receipts that fell from Joe Harry West's account book showed that although the Appletons were in Nottingham in earliest days, their woodworking depended on circumstances of every day. One John Thorn signed his name below the following: "Received March 21, 1785, of Josiah Appleton, the sum of two pound five shilling

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in full for making a coffin and carrying the corpse of his mother, deceased, to Trenton."

As late as 1878 an attempt was made to publish a newspaper in Nottingham. This was *The Methodist Record* of which Miss West showed us the first edition. It was edited by the Rev. D. M. DeHughes. "And of course," Miss Georgie went on, "you've heard the story of the West family Bible." When we said we hadn't we were told the legend which seems to have been denied as much as it was recalled, according to Joe Harry's writings. There was a Stephen West, who owned the Bible and who left Monmouth, later Freehold, in 1690, for Bristol County, Massachusetts. The British, foraging in Newport, Rhode Island, and at New Bedford, are supposed to have annexed the Good Book, valuing it highly, according to no less an authority than Edwin Saltar, because upon its pages General Washington had been obligated in one degree of Masonry. Later, the Bible was said to have turned up in England, but that's uncertain.

A deep reverence for Washington is to be found in all Joe Harry wrote. On April 30, 1889, he wanted the church bells rung for the centenary of the First President's inauguration. "Nothing at all was done," he regrets, because the ministers of Nottingham, then Hamilton Square, forgot about it. "I wanted the bell at the Baptist Church rung," he said, "but a very few members of the church have a foolish notion that it is not right to have the church bells rung for any purpose except to call the people together for services and for tolling at funerals. They seem to forget, if they ever knew, that one hundred years ago the foundations of religion, as well as civil liberty, were laid." Then he adds, "I could have had the bell of the Presbyterian Church rung if I had taken the trouble to go up there."

Apparently Mr. West decided that if the Baptists wouldn't ring their bell in so good a cause, he wouldn't rub it in by asking the Presbyterians.

There was once an Assanpink Navigation Company, established to further the objective of establishing water trans-

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portation by the use of the Assunpink and Millstone creeks with Raritan Bay. Now, when passers-by can determine, if they do not know already, the size and condition of these streams, this might seem to have been a comic company, a Gilbert & Sullivan corporation. But no, this organization, in existence for several years, actually supported a plan to slack-water the creeks and reach the Raritan River in flat-bottom boats. Not so long ago a channel was found to have been dug east of Reed's, later Temple's Mills, and an old lock, presumably part of the equipment for this dream of transportation, was discovered long ago by William C. Vannest.

Joe Harry was concerned with burials in much of his writing, speaking of graves and coffins and corpses in a clinical way even before his business swung from market carts to funeral carriages. The first burial in Nottingham, he found, was in 1786 when Betsey, the daughter of Amos Hutchinson, was mourned by a little procession that filed into the Presbyterian yard. It seems that Nottingham folk, until then, had been burying their dead some distance removed, at Crosswicks, behind the meeting house, in the Pearson burial plot at White Horse, in "a graveyard near Sandtown on the road to Edinburg of which all traces are lost" and in family enclosures elsewhere. Although the Baptist Church at Nottingham was being used for services in 1785, no stones were ever found with dates prior to 1793.

In this case it is worth while noting that Abram Eldridge who gave the lot for the church was accorded the right to use its graveyard for the first time, although he could not have counted on that as part of his philanthropy. The death of Abram came suddenly, for, according to the account of James G. Hutchinson, "he died of chewing a piece of cedar bush, a piece of which lodged in his windpipe."

Mr. West concerned himself with church suppers and squabbles, national affairs which affected the community, and details of interments with varied aplomb. His explanation of a congregation's demand for a new church was not the fact that the roof leaked and that interior and exterior showed

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obvious disrepair, but that the new members were "getting a little proud." The conclusion is that appearances affected the older members not at all, that discomforts made for a more rugged religion, which seems to have been the generally accepted sentiment of the times.

Although one who is squeamish about such details should pass it by, we were compelled to copy Mr. West's own words as he described the removal of the body of his father from one graveyard to another at the behest of other members of the family.

"Today," the entry reads, "we moved the body of Father from the Baptist graveyard to the Pearson graveyard below White Horse. In years gone by he used to say he wished to be buried there but when he died I thought it was useless to take him so far. But recently his first wife's children desired to have his body taken there and I made no objections.

"When we digged down to the box, we found the lid had sunken down with the weight of the earth." Joe Harry had certain ideas on how relics might be best preserved and for pages in his diary he rebuked those who had placed articles inside a bottle in a cornerstone, explaining how they could have been kept from decay by saner methods. "The flesh," he continued, apparently without a shudder, "had all gone from Father's body but the shape of the skull, the prominent forehead, high cheek bones and teeth made his remains look something like they did, and others beside myself said that they could see a resemblance of his former self. The small tufts of beard on his temple were yet there but the remains showed what havoc death always makes with the forms of loved ones."

And so they took the head and footstones along for the reinterment near the grave of the first Mrs. West which is not far from that of Ann Pearson in a plot once part of the Pearson plantation, later to the east of Pearson Cubberly's farm. There was no need to dig the second grave so deep, Joe Harry wrote, but his reasons are even more horrific.

The diary, which ought to be published in its entirety by

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some historical group, has to do with blizzards, early Spring weather and the shortcomings of an age that was speeding up in Hamilton Square. We can imagine the author now, mildly resentful of those unmindful that Mr. Flock's grave was just down the Way, that Washington crossed the Assunpink not far from town, and that Patrick Lamb, one of Washington's guides for the flank-attack march, knew the village well. Moreover Sally Howe, spelled How on her tombstone, was a little girl in Nottingham, one of those who, dressed in white, spread flowers in the path Washington took through Trenton in 1789, singing a specially prepared tribute, "Welcome Mighty Chief Once More." But instead of scolding, the diarist seems to have lost himself in recording much that the newspapers cast aside, injecting a characteristic comment now and then.

He recalls the blizzard of 1888 from the angle of Hamilton Square, revealing that the school was closed for a week, that the teachers couldn't get through from Trenton and that workmen battled two full days to open the turnpike company's road from Newtown, now Robbinsville, to Sandtown, Mercerville today.

Those who claim that Winters are not what they used to be and that unseasonably mild weather in January these last few years is without precedent should inspect Mr. West's diary. Violets were in bloom January 7, 1890, he writes. "A bunch of them were picked for me that day by Cora Hammell, in her father's yard."

There are a number of minor clashes among church folk of Nottingham recorded but the most memorable seems to have been when the Rev. William Boswell divided his congregation on the principle of "close and open communion." Bearing analogy to some issues of the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversies of contemporary days, we could not help reflect, as we read and talked at the Wests', how foolish such arguments must be to God.

Some members of the congregation held that only those who had been baptized by immersion should be permitted to

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partake of communion, as many Baptists have maintained before and since that time. It is not indicated by Mr. West which side Mr. Boswell was on but it is obvious that the division split off some sixty members of the congregation until one Sunday morning, without warning, the pastor found the church doors locked against him.

"They have locked me out of the church," Mr. Boswell declared from the top step, "but they can't lock me out of heaven!"

That was in 1820. After that Mr. Boswell and his supporters went some distance away and formed The Reformed General Baptist Church to the congregation of which the minister gave his services without interruption until his death in 1833.

Under a map roughly drawn on which the four principal roads of Nottingham are shown, Joe Harry wrote something that Walter Cubberly should have told us, that most of the village was the Cornelia Cubberly farm and that the farm was never out of the family until it was cut up for building lots when the town had become Hamilton Square. On the map are plainly located the cabinetmaker's, up Nottingham Way from the Presbyterian Church; the chair factory, not far from the Baptist Church; the tavern at the crossroads and the principal houses.

We closed the diaries reluctantly and with equal regret bade the Wests and their feline community farewell, realizing that through the years in this old house the heirlooms of yesteryear had been guarded faithfully.

Seeing Alfred Reed wasn't so easily arranged. Mr. Reed had been referred to us by the Ridgeways who said he would be a much more elusive informant. He was that and more. We stopped at his house on Nottingham Way the first time when it was too late for casual talking and Mr. Reed, with his quiet voice and tiny beard, clearly intended the Nottingham rush-bottom chairs he showed us to produce all the eloquence of the past. Next time we called, it was mid-afternoon and we had been trying to see Mr. Reed at the Methodist Church where he was custodian; finding him, finally, at home, he

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asked us to come back another time because he was just about to take a bath. We remembered that Mrs. Ridgeway had told us to make arrangements ahead of time if we were coming on a Saturday for, she said, "baths are an institution in Nottingham and some of the older folk must be persuaded to take their tubs early."

We chose a Saturday morning two weeks after that and talked with Mr. Reed on the porch where we had found him. He knew we were coming that time and he had hurried his work at the church. But there was none of Walter Cubberly's volubility in Alfred Reed. He brought his chairs outdoors and posed for a picture, talking mostly about the rubber company that had been in Nottingham even in his father's time. Simeon Reed would have remembered better than he, he said, the establishment undertaken prior to 1866 by C. V. Mead and a pastor, the Rev. A. S. Manning. Their rubber mill removed to Trenton and in 1872 the old buildings were taken over by the Mercer Rubber Company which was operating when we were there, manufacturing belting, packing and hose.

The trolley cars that used to come out from Trenton were recalled in the tracks that had been partly covered over on Nottingham Way and so we asked Mr. Reed about them. He remembered them, rocking their way along the single track, he said, but he wasn't sure when service was suspended. Many of his recollections had been folded away forever like so much that happened in Nottingham after 1808 when "there were twenty buildings in the Square."

We looked across the Way, as we talked, to the old house surrounded by the tangle of an old neglected garden. "It was closed years ago, wasn't it?" we asked. "They say it's just as it was, full of antiques. It would be a thrill to get inside and see." "No," said Mr. Reed, and that was all. Afterward, we knew why. His life had been strangely like that old house, full of broken dreams, and we went away, relieved that we had made no bold, unfeeling attempt "to get inside."

Chapter 2

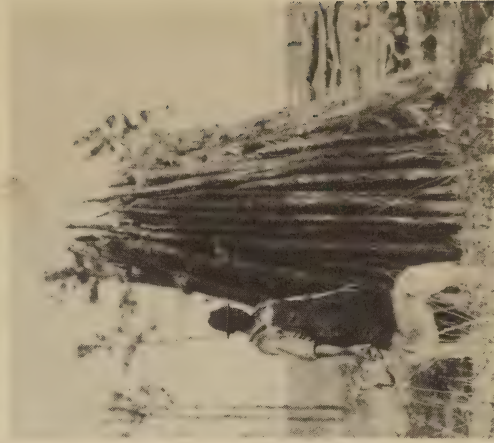
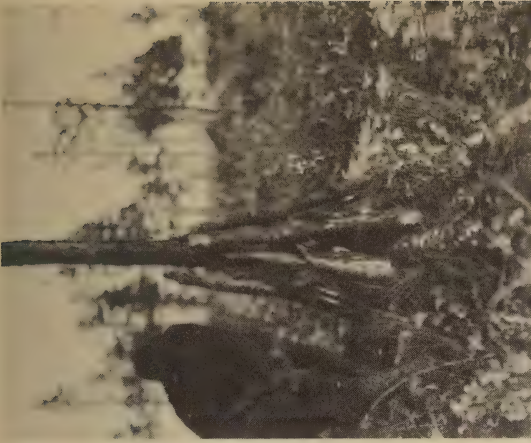
SCRABBLETOWN SHOULD BE TICKTOWN

SCRABBLE—To crawl on hands and knees; make irregular, unmeaning marks: *v.t.* to mark with irregular lines or letters: *n.* a movement with hands and knees; act of scrabbling.

ON FINLEY's map of New Jersey, published in 1834, there's a little town called Scrabbletown, or, to be absolutely accurate, Scrabble T. It is at the lower point of a small triangle that could be made by connecting Wrightstown, New Egypt and Scrabbletown, a few miles southeast of Wrightstown, more southwest of New Egypt.

There was no Mercer County when the map was issued, nor were there Ocean and Camden. Burlington County stretched from Bloomsbury and Lambertton, now parts of Trenton, out the Assunpink Creek to Keith's line of 1687, and then down to Little Egg Harbor; following the coast, it embraced Tuckerton, then a port of entry, moved southwest to the Little Egg Harbour River, followed the river to its branch, the Atsion River, swinging back of Taunton along the furthest waters of "Pensaukin" Creek to the Delaware River. Monmouth County was bounded on one side by the Keith line, on the northwest by a line connecting Allentown and Brown's Point, now Keyport, fronting on Raritan Bay, Sandy Hook Bay and the Atlantic down to Little Egg Harbour below Manahocking, now Manahawkin.

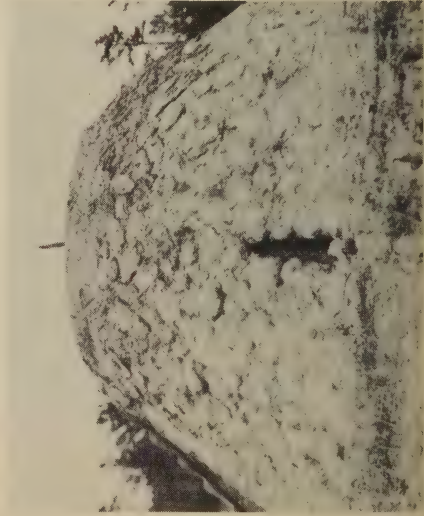
So, with these and other counties being made up of so much territory, so much more than today, every road, every stream, every little village would seem to have boasted greater importance. Certainly the roads, the "highways" traveled by stagecoaches in even those days of 1834, were more important, you will say, especially if you will take the trouble to find them now. But were they? Sometimes it is more sensible



(TOP, L.) The burning of charcoal, recently revived in the neighborhood of the forgotten towns of the Pines, is a science all its own. A single pole starts the operation, as shown. (ABOVE) Another pole of pine is laid at right angle on the ground and small pieces are piled at the base. (TOP, R.) The sticks grow longer and seem to be climbing the center upright as the painstaking process. (L.) The saplings which soon will be charcoal are much longer now and have been mounted at the core, tent-shape. (R.) Now the center pole is lost to sight and the charcoal pit itself has been started.



(L.) This step is called the "placing of the floats" with squares of sandy, boggy soil and turf placed against the poles in the pit. (R.) A throw-back to the first charcoal days is this Piney ladder upon which Mr. Giberson, one of those who have revived the industry, is shown ascending. (BOT., L.) Here's the charcoal pit, ready for firing, with the primitive ladder at the side. Note the carefully made air-draft. (BOT., CENTER) The pit has now burned down and cooled. Some charcoal has been raked out of the ashes. Many of the workers, in the revival of an old industry, forgotten so long, are Negroes. (BOT., R.) Here is a close-up of the finished product as it leaves the pit, not unburned sticks as they appear, but pine burned all the way through, ready to be bagged for market.



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to conclude that these cross-country routes, having been opened up by WPA labor for fire-stops in the deep woods, are in better condition now than ever. The difference is that the lack of regular travel has outlawed the villages that once were set up along them, the taverns at which the stages stopped to refresh man and beast, the possibility of traffic in the opposite direction. The day we looked for Scrabletown we met no one at all in a thirty-mile stretch.

That name, Scrabletown, had puzzled us for a long while. Some years ago we were minded to look for it but something turned up along the way, as is sometimes the case, and our concentration went awry. Then someone said that Scrabletown was Pointville and we left it alone. Later on, however, we were told that Pointville was *not* old Scrabletown at all and we got out our maps and yellowed books all over again.

We reassured ourselves that Finley's map put Scrabletown some distance off any road worth considering. Finley showed a highway coming down from Bordentown, crossing the Monmouth Road between Jobstown and Jacobstown, pushing on through Wrightstown, through Half Way, Cedar Bridge and Manahocking. Scrabletown is shown some distance off that road, on a line with Juliustown. If Mr. Finley was accurate, we argued, Scrabletown couldn't possibly have become Pointville. It was much closer to the site of Hanover Furnace. Yet the furnace and Scrabletown could have no relationship for Mr. Gordon, in his *Gazetteer*, listed Scrabletown with Arney's Town, Shelltown, Jacobstown and Wrightstown in his description of Hanover Township and later on, in the same paragraph, declared the township owned "1 furnace, called Hanover."

Scrabletown, he says, was a "hamlet of Hanover t-ship, Burlington co., 10 miles E. from Mount Holly, and 12 S.E. from Bordentown; contains a tavern, and 6 or 8 cottages in a poor, sandy, pine country."

So one crisp morning in April we set out with new companions in search of Scrabletown. They were new companions but not new friends. One had been tramping the back

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roads in Bucks County and New Jersey for years when he and his wife came upon the stories of Forgotten Towns. Another was the village parson, who doffed his clericals for the occasion to follow new trails through the country he said he had hunted often with dog and gun. Few can boast as much enthusiasm for exploring and the outdoors as these.

We set out from Mount Holly, once again taking the Monmouth Road. The sunlight etched the ragged ridge of Arney's Mount as we hurried on to Jobstown. On the maps a century old, there is a road swinging off to the right from Jobstown to New Egypt and this is serviceable today, opening up country which, even in this area below Central New Jersey, begins to roll. The day we chose was changeable; now and then the sky clouded over and when it did, a stiff breeze waved the new leaves of varied greens. We turned off the Jobstown-New Egypt road for a moment inasmuch as our companions had never visited the Springfield Meeting House, built in 1721. We found it the same as ever, quaint in its setting of interlaced dirt roads, worn deep through two hundred years.

The Stromboli stock farm is across the way with its green fences and well-kept acres as far as one can see. Having turned about, we set off toward Wrightstown again, past a house or two, several weather-beaten signposts to corners all but forgotten until we came to the meadow that once was the bottom of a pond.

Wrightstown, in the years since the World War, has been a curiosity for many. To it have returned those who went into training at Camp Dix before departure to France. To it, since those days when the camp itself was as much a ghost town as the row of jerrybuilt stores in its business section, have come CCC boys, student officers, thousands of men in a program that has ever seemed to presage a throwback to transient scenes of military bustle. The Wrightstown that was Penny Hill will never come back and through this peacetime interval has remained aloof from the program of building, smashing and rebuilding again.

After the War, the old barracks, the recreation halls, the

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hospital and nearly all that made Camp Dix were removed but not before some of us had fixed pictures of desolate lines of rough buildings of weather-blackened lumber. The stores were boarded up, doors were padlocked and rats and squirrels had a merry time while the years tried to wash clean inscriptions that no longer held meaning. Then, with recovery trends the camp took on new life. New barracks were built, others enlarged, a few reclaimed. Thus, as we moved through Wrightstown, down the Browns Mills road toward Pointville, we were thinking of war days and wondering if they would come back.

Pointville is but two miles from the newer Fort Dix. To the left where once in the distance one could see the hospital with a large red cross upon its roof, was a wide field now, with a new-made road posted with a notice that one must not trespass in that direction without a military pass. Further on was the crossing of the donkey-railroad out to the target range, with its reconditioned narrow-gauge rails. Just beyond was Pointville, with a hotel at the crossroads, an old store, and a cluster of weather-scarred houses. We would have turned left, in the direction of Hanover Furnace, if a native hadn't appeared just then on the porch of a deserted store.

"Did you ever hear of Scrabbletown?" we asked him.

It was apparent that he had never heard of such a question, either.

"Is there any town called Scrabbletown near here?" we asked him, trying again.

"Sure," he said, as we showed him our ancient map in order to prove it wasn't all foolishness. "It's just down the road here, where there's a clump of trees. You can almost see them from here."

He indicated the opposite direction from that we would have chosen. Certainly if the Wrightstown-Pointville road followed the one shown on the map of 1834, Scrabbletown was the other way. At this juncture we began to wonder if Scrabbletown might not have been an earlier and less glorified name for Cranberry Hall.

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However, we went down the road we were told. It was hardly a road, little more than a cowpath. Turning to the right of the old Pointville Hotel, we passed a shed-like building in use as a dwelling. From a window an old woman peered out, as if in amazement that a car should pass that way. On the face of the makeshift dwelling was a faded inscription, "Military Service Store," and we wondered if it had been always there or if it had been moved from nearer Camp Dix. Outside was a rusted, ornate gas lamp, long out of use.

We came to the cluster of trees and paused. On foot, we came upon the cellar holes of two former dwellings. In the brambles that soon would cover it, was the tin roof of one of them. Beyond, bloomed lilacs where they had bloomed when someone lived there. Around the ruins were bits of plaster that had been painted blue. Had this been the Scrabbletown that boasted a tavern and six or eight "cottages"?

We tramped across the surrounding fields, in search of a barn. For a time we were baffled by fence posts, two larger pieces of timber that jutted from the earth, one of which bore the marks of an adze and holes for pegs as in old-time construction. More baffling still was a series of cavities in the ground, patches of cinders, a few more timbers charred by fire that perhaps had swept the fields. When we found the remains of a drainage system and two fireplugs miles from anywhere in the midst of tall Indian grass, we knew we had come upon the outer edge of Camp Dix once again.

The road led through to the narrow-gauge railroad and then across, where two huge maples and more lilacs invited the discovery of another cellar hole. It may be that the camp reached out and encircled the village in war-time and that the houses were standing there then, but that is not likely, considering the appearance of the ruins and the return of many Springs to cover them. It was not until we lingered among the relics of times that built a military town and all but destroyed it twenty years ago, sweeping an ancient village away with it, that we decided that if this was not Scrabbletown it must be Ticktown.

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It doesn't matter now who discovered the first tick. However, the finding of a large and active member of the wood-tick clan soon had us all on a new hunt, not for a town. As we walked through the fields, we had been unaware of them. Now that we looked for them we found them almost everywhere. The parson seemed the most productive for no sooner had he offered advice that if one should bury into the skin, he must not be pulled out but touched gently with a spot of gasoline, than he found invaders in the cuffs of trousers, under his collar, even in his hair.

This was an unexpected delay. It was time to eat and yet no one wanted to, just then. Modesty gave way to necessity and the last formalities were forgotten among us. The bugles were heard from the camp, followed by a raucous whistle marking the noon hour, but sandwiches, no matter how inviting, had to be postponed. At last the journey was resumed, back through Pointville and down the road we would have taken on our own, with a swing to the left through Cranberry Hall, which our companions had never visited. But although we told them the old stories we had heard, of the grand mansion that once graced the corner, of Nick Green and the appearance of the road when we were there long ago with Warner Hargrove, we were given little heed, for ticks were still emerging from unexpected hideouts.

Under such circumstances, the uncomfortable feeling lingers long after there is need for it, we said, as we appeased an appetite sharpened by the pine-scented air before pushing on through Hockamick, Brindletown, and back by way of Whiting. But long after we returned, in fact late on the day following, a sweater yielded two more of our unwanted passengers.

There is no need to recall the story of Whiting, so often mistaken as Whitings, the town founded by a New Englander who thought to make his fortune there. However, inasmuch as charcoal burning, one of the greatest industries of the pinelands, had been but recently revived there, we forgot the wood ticks long enough to watch the operations.

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The process, as revived at Whiting, was exactly the same as it had been in the primitive years. First a level piece of ground is chosen for the pits. Then pitch pine is cut from trees four to twelve inches around, chopped in four-foot lengths. Each pit is filled with seven to eight cords. Other wood is cut in two-foot lengths to build the four-foot chimney, through the middle of the pit, much in the manner of a bird building a nest. The four-foot pine is placed around the chimney until a twelve-foot circle has been made. Then the chimney is built up another four feet and more of the four-foot logs are piled on in a similar manner until the pile is cone-shaped. Finally, the whole is covered with turf, roots and rubble which, in turn, is topped with packed sand. A series of holes is punched through all around, about a foot apart, for draft.

After firing, the pit burns about a week, with wood placed down the chimney constantly, for the smoldering blaze. This unrelenting feeding of the fire is called chunking. When the week is up, if all has gone well, the resin has left the pine and seeped out through the sand at the outside, now a reddish color, and the pit itself had dropped three to four feet. When it has cooled, the charcoal—"coal" to natives of the Pines—is ready for market. The day we were there, two pits were burning and from one the finished product was being bagged for shipment in a truck from Newark, standing ready for the trip. We had come upon many charcoal pits in our travels through the Forgotten Towns but these at Whiting were the only ones any of us had seen in actual operation. Depression times had revived another industry of the near-by far-away.

From Whiting we pushed on through Roosevelt City, named for the first Roosevelt who was President, through Pasadena to Woodmansie, along the Jersey Central, in an effort to pick up the road which the old map indicated coming down through old Half Way to Cedar Bridge. Here and there a herd of deer leaped away through the trees as a sudden rain squall deepened the mystery of the desolate woodlands.

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It was May when we returned for another attempt to solve the riddle. This time just two of us approached Pointville along the road that crosses the highway that was concreted in war-time from Pemberton to Wrightstown. There is no trace of such a road on the old map. Taking their Sunday afternoon ease on the porch of a store in Pointville, not far from the two abandoned hotels pathetically calling attention to bars which were made seemingly mythical by all appearances, were two men. Neither was the one who had indicated the way to Scrabbletown so positively.

The inevitable question was put: "Did you ever hear of Scrabbletown?"

"Scrappletown?" The name was repeated with the variation that seems to be generally accepted now. "Sure, it was just down the road a piece—this way." Once again the uncertain track to Ticktown, as we had begun to call it, was indicated.

"Are you sure?" we persisted. "We were down *there*, and there's nothing, nothing at all, except ticks—and a few cellar holes."

"That's all there is," replied the younger man, whose breath returned at least one of the bars to possibility again. "There ain't been nothin' more for years." The older man, whose smile was moonish and whose nods of acquiescence removed the need for words as well as the necessity for dislodging a mouthful of tobacco juice, allowed his eyes to twinkle.

"I seen you some place," declared the younger, with a vehemence we were unable to turn aside. "You been here before. You grewed up here."

Useless were our denials. We suggested that we might have been recalled from previous questioning in the neighborhood, or perhaps from as long ago as the occasion when we went to Pointville with Warner Hargrove. "I seen you some place," the voice kept on. "I could tell, minute I seen you coming across the road."

"Take a look at this map," we invited and finally achieved an appearance of more concentration. "We've been looking

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for this road. You see, it's shown here, coming down from Bordentown across the Monmouth Road through Wrightstown and then through Half Way to Cedar Bridge. But see where Scrabbletown is! If this is the road, passing here, then Scrabbletown is over that way, toward New Egypt!"

"No," we were assured again, "Scrappletown was down this other way. Nothin' over that way but Cookstown and the rifle range and what's left of Hanover Furnace. Maybe the map's wrong."

We disliked anyone reflecting on the accuracy of old maps, no matter how just such criticism. We looked at the chart again with its counties hand-colored in pink and green, blue and yellow. We followed the road where it crossed the Slab Bridge Branch, as well as the Pole Bridge Branch, of the Rancocas, or Rancocus, as Mr. Finley had spelled it. We took note anew of the position of Pemberton, of Vincent Town, of Lisbon and of the Stop-the-Jade Creek, named, they had said, in commemoration of an incident in the life of the wife of Ong, whose forgotten town is still Ong's Hat.

The old road was gone, we concluded. It must have come down through Hanover back of Brown's Mills. Yes, that must have been it. And what had happened? The war had come, Scrabbletown had been obliterated, new roads had pushed the old into the thickets. Wooden barracks and stables had been thrown together, drainpipes cut into the fields, fire plugs put here and there and narrow ribbons of cement interlaced between them all. Wrightstown had boomed, faded like a shack town on the prairies and now was coming back, with new barracks around the bend, as the world talked up a newer and more efficient kind of war.

"How did Pointville get its name?" we asked suddenly, as if from the midst of a melancholy reverie.

"That's easy," said the younger man, the one who owned the truck parked on what there was of sidewalk. "All the roads come to a point. This one here comes over from Wrightstown and goes on to Brown's Mills. That one winds in to Cookstown. This other goes over to Pemberton and

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that one across the street gets down to the CCC camp at the edge of the rifle range. And then this other one, the one you says you took, goes by Scrabbletown.”

“Yep,” said the other chap, with a foolish smile. Perhaps he had to contain himself—and the contents of his mouth—with company present.

We spent what was left of that afternoon, making sure, taking every possible trail that seemed likely. There were more outlines of cellar-less buildings on the outer edge of what had been the military camp and what was to become, they said, one of the largest camps in the country. Wild roses were blooming among the rusted and battered fireplugs standing like fat little soldiers across the fields. The road back of Hanover Furnace was barred and posted with warnings signed by the commanding officer, telling of possible dangers from anti-aircraft guns and missiles that might sing through the air over the newer range equipment. Much of the woodland was cleared, with cordwood neatly stacked at intervals.

Every definition of the “scrabble” of Scrabbletown was weighed and found wanting. “To crawl on hands and knees”—perhaps the ticks were left to do that now. “Make irregular unmeaning marks”—perhaps the map-maker was guilty of that, if the opinions of the Pointvillains were to be accepted. “To mark with irregular lines or letters”—well, that amounted to the same thing. “A movement with hands and knees”—unquestionable the ticks had produced even more movement than that.

Perhaps we can say of Scrabbletown what those two citizens of Pointville said of their town in an unpatriotic moment:

“There warn’t never much to it. There was more in the war than ever before or since. Now—well, take a look!”

Chapter 3

OVER CANOE MOUNTAIN

"I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white . . ."

—ROBERT HERRICK: 1594-1674

THE RIDGEWAYS first spoke to us of Honey Hollow. Dr. Ridgeway said that George Bennett, of Trenton, who had been his scoutmaster in former days, had been tramping the hills for years and could hardly wait to take us to the ruins of houses he thought had been the homes of Jackson Whites.

"Make it a Sunday, if you can," urged Dr. Ridgeway, "for George is a contractor and he's likely to forget about it. He'll forget about making a living and go any time you say!"

After that first journey into the neighborhood of the Hollow, George seemed as much a mystery as the land to which he guided us. It was obvious, from the moment we met him on that sunny Sunday we set, that he had been tramping more than hills. He knew many of the Forgotten Towns further south as well as anybody, and was a friend of many of those we knew in Chatsworth, old Shamong, Harrisville, Cedar Bridge and the tiny villages back of Pemberton and Mount Holly.

Comical Corner? Sure, he knew where that was. Bucto? That was short for Timbucto.

Tall, rawboned, seemingly tireless, George smoked a blackened pipe with tiny bowl, striking off through the brush time and time again with deadly accuracy, to show us something he must have known about for years on end.

It is likely that the area through which we traveled that day saw more humans in a group than it had in a decade. Somehow we had gathered a little army. There were the Garwoods, who had gone looking for Scrabbletown with us, only to find Ticktown in its place. There were the Ridgeways, four of them. And there was Ty Fogg, the photogra-

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pher, who had been awaiting just such an invasion of the hills and valleys of ever-so-near and far-away. That was the first of many grand trips with Ty.

All nine of us left in two cars, moving out along the River Road along the Delaware, a route as familiar to us as it must be to many who listen to back-seat drivers and stay on concrete and macadam. Even if we owned a liking for well-paved and heavily traveled highways, there was to be little of that that day.

Finley's map of 1834 is full of challenging names above Trenton and we had wondered about them for a long while. Pennington as Penny Town was there long ago and Maidenhead had become Lawrenceville. But we wondered about Rocktown and New Market, Columbia and Stoutsville, Woodsville and Birmingham, there above Trenton in the Hunterdon County as it was in the beginning. We thought we knew something of the country around Washington's Crossing, old McConkey's Ferry, but we knew nothing at all about Honey Hollow and Mount Canoe, Mount Rosalie.

If we were in any way struck by George Bennett's appearance, he must have been surprised by ours. We were not, however, surprised at his surprise. It isn't that we are weighted down by elephantine ears or embarrassed by a face that would frighten the unsuspecting. It's just that we lack an elusive, impressive something that so many seem to expect in one whose interests run to digging up the past. So many times when we have gone somewhere to speak on vanished villages, the chairman has greeted us with an "Oh, we had thought you would be much older!" George varied his salutation. "Well, you're different, much different from what I expected," said he. "I thought you would be a big fellow, maybe a little thin." But he denied, quickly, that he was disappointed on both counts.

Along the way, through Wilburtha and Scudder's Falls, George was talking of walks he had taken, and with every disclosure we made a mental note to question him specifically when an interruption might not prove fatal. "There was Princeville," he said. "Ever hear of that? Not the Prince

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Town that's become Princeton, but Princeville. Then there was Federal City—somebody had an idea they were going to make it the capital of the whole country. It was near Cross Keys, which is Ewingville now—and don't get that mixed up with Ewing. And by the way, this country's just chock full of mills—or what's left of them. . . .”

We turned at a point below Washington's Crossing, swinging to the right from the river and the old canal. “They call this Somerset,” George said. “This is where the Somerset Railroad came through. This very road was laid over the tracks and ties. When it came to crossing the tracks of another company, a feud started that went on till they got out the militia—both lines had gangs of men camping out to see that nobody sneaked the tracks across—or under. I can show you where the Somerset Railroad still looks like one!”

Concentration was quickly turned from abandoned railroads to mills, however, for our guide had drawn our attention to one standing mostly as it had been, as we turned from the river. Now he urged us to pause and then go back. The mill that had made use of Jacob's Creek was no longer in service but the state of its preservation reconstructed scenes of its active days. George declared it had been operating in days before the Revolution but some changes had been made. Perhaps these alterations had been completed in 1847 for that was the date of the stone which also carried the name of J. T. Comly. There, as in so many of the journeys that were to follow, names would turn up that were to linger with us—the Scudders, for instance. Nathaniel Scudder, born in 1733, the son of Colonel Jacob, was a Princeton graduate and a practitioner in Manalapan long before he served on the Committee of Observation and Correspondence, long before he was named with John Witherspoon, Abraham Clark, Jonathan Elmer and Elias Boudinot as delegates to Congress, only to be killed at Shrewsbury in 1781 in a Tory raid. Two of his sons, Dr. John Anderson Scudder and Joseph, became almost as well known, one as a member of Congress and the other Monmouth county clerk.

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We had gone but a short distance along the road from Somerset when George called an abrupt halt. "There's the ruin of another mill down here in the valley somewhere," he said. "Somewhere" was an unnecessary addition for he knew very well where to find the broken walls. We climbed a fence, hurried down through the dogwood and mayflowers and stopped. There in the moss, with a huge oak growing from what had been its interior, was another wall. George kicked some of the brush aside to reveal a millstone. Surely this area *was* full of mills if they rubbed shoulders like these.

"How did you know these millstones were here?" we inquired. "I ran a fox through here once," George said quickly.

Less than a mile further on, the road turns to the right, past the Mercer airport and beyond, to the left, over a bridge that spans Jacob's Creek. This intersection has been constructed of concrete and today the improvement would tend to eliminate any consideration of the habitation adjacent to it. But George Bennett had other ideas about that, too. "There used to be several houses, like a little village," he declared. "One of 'em was a hotel." Neither hotel nor houses are there today although there are foundations.

The paved road ends with the second turn and an unimproved road keeps on in the direction taken by the railroad that George said had gone through to Hopewell but which, we learned later, had cut across to Millstone, old Somerset Courthouse, for some years. All evidence of the line had been covered over, we concluded too quickly. George was saying that we had reached the junction of the Trenton, Bear Tavern and Jacob's Creek roads.

"Bear Tavern," we repeated. We told him we had passed it many times on picnics at Washington's Crossing. "This is where Washington divided his army to converge on Trenton," we said, "although we've often wondered about some of the details." Once again we had returned to events connected with preparations for the battle at Trenton. Washington and his army had been encamped at McConkey's (McKonkey's) Ferry. The troops under General Dickinson

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had been at Yardleyville, now Yardley, and more detachments were further up the river. The Pennsylvania troops, we recalled from the historian's narrative, were at Morrisville, under General Ewing, and at Bristol, under General Cadwallader.

Ewing? Cadwallader? There were the names again. "I'll introduce you to one of the Cadwalladers," said George.

"Well," we went on, having found the proper place in the *Historical Collections*, "'the army marched with a quick step in a body from the river up the crossroad to the Bear Tavern, about a mile from the river. The whole army marched down this road to the village of Birmingham, distant about three and a half miles. There they halted, examined their priming, and found it all wet.'"

George appeared resentful, as if we were approximating history that had become revered, through the use of slang. "That's what it says," we affirmed. "'All wet'—but they didn't mean it the way we do now." Hurrying on, we read, as the car approached the crossroads, "'From Birmingham to Trenton, the distance by the River road and the Scotch road is nearly equal, being about four and a half miles. The troops were formed in two divisions. One of them, commanded by General Sullivan, marched down the River road. The other, commanded by Generals Lord Stirling, Greene, Mercer and Stevens (with David Laning and others for their guides), filed off to the left, crossed over to the Scotch road, and went down this until it enters the Pennington road—'"

"Here's the Bear Tavern," said George, and the car was stopped. Names were spinning: Birmingham that we were to hear as Brumagen; Laning, or Lanning, whose lineal kin we were to know; Lord Stirling, born in New York, claimant of an earldom the homeland would not admit; Sullivan, the man from Maine, captured with Lord Stirling on Long Island. . . . "One road, this way, goes down to Washington's Crossing," George went on. "Some say they called that Bernardsville before there were mix-ups with the Bernardsville near Morristown."

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We looked across the way at the tavern, which has a roadside sign distinguishing it as other signs distinguish historic landmarks of Washington Crossing Park. Many changes have been made in the ancient inn so that its appearance from the road is much different than it was when the rebels connived to achieve their victory at Trenton. However, inspection at the rear of the tavern was well repaid for the old lines there are little altered.

On the opposite corner we found a cellar hole, the stones of a crumbled foundation and a neglected rhubarb patch. As usual, George said he remembered the house that was there. "This was an important crossroads once," he said. "It was more important than now and there was less danger from traffic. But they've got the 'Bear' spelled wrong," he continued. "It oughtn't to be spelled that way at all. The tavern was named for its proprietor, who was either Baar or Baer. He wasn't a Bear, anyway."

That was one explanation. Another is that the inn was "The Sign of the Bear" comparable to "The Sign of the Three Pigeons" near Bergen, "The Sign of the Cross Keys" in Evesham Township, or "The Sign of the Bull's Head" in New York. Names, as we have decided again and again, are easily turned about. Take that of Ewing, the name of the General who commanded a division assigned a part in the affair at Trenton, frustrated by the river ice. Ewing, Ewingville and Ewing Township thankfully ignore the fact that one spelling was "Irwing."

We pressed on for another half-mile and then turned to the left, up a dusty stone road that would be taken by few lacking a definite quest. On one side was a snake fence and beyond it a field, waving with tall wheat. On the other, in the distance, was a ridge, the many greens of the woods that covered them making a lovely setting. The cars were halted abruptly once again, as the trail of dust behind us blew across the fence. "This is Honey Hollow," said George. "There's the sign."

Sure enough, there *was* a sign. The signs that pointed to

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Honey Hollow had been one of George Bennett's chief concerns when he stressed the urgency of getting there as soon as possible. He had said there was a time when six or seven could be found at odd corners. Now only one remained—and this was it—a rude yardarm, sagging on a post covered with poison ivy. Luckily the pointing hand and name were still distinguishable. George seemed so pleased that we had arrived before this last directional should vanish, as he declared it would, in a few months more.

The roadway into Honey Hollow began across the trail of loose rock and at its entrance was another sign, this time one of warning. "Travel at your own risk," it said. Beyond it was a narrowing trail, lined with a few cedars and other trees. Beyond a plowed field was a house.

"This is where you meet Cadwallader," George announced. "He's the game warden and caretaker for the Kusers who own the top of the mountain now—they call it Mount Rosalie, for their mother. But Cadwallader won't know much about the Jackson Whites, for he's been here only ten or twelve years."

We had determined from the first that this early invasion of Honey Hollow was to be one of seeing and listening, but mention of the Jackson Whites so far south made us wonder. For years we had been hearing about Jackson Whites, with all kinds of explanations as to who and where they were and why they were there. "Do you know about the Jackson Whites?" someone would ask. "Oh, yes," the reply would be invariably, "the Jackson Whites." We had been given the definition Dr. Ridgeway had heard and when we asked George for his, it was elliptical, as if more would come after we had the setting well-established in our minds.

"The Jackson Whites," he said, "were deserters from Jackson's army. They eloped with the servants of wealthy pioneer families in this area and settled in Honey Hollow. The ruins of their houses, up there in the hills, are what I'm going to take you to. These Jackson Whites look just like Mexicans." George obviously believed the story.

"You mean to say some of them are left—*down here?*" we queried quickly.



Some claim Pointville was Scrabbletown, but in Pointville, not always as deserted as it appears in the noonday sun, they point down beyond a clump of maples and say it must have been there. Even Pointville has forgotten many things.



The houses that once clustered in Scrabbletown are mere cellar holes, filled with refuse, rotted shingles and broken plaster now — and ticks to make it Ticktown.



Where Scrabbletown was, Camp Dix came and before talk of newer wars restored it, fire-plugs like this were all but lost in the tall grass, as if miles from anywhere.



"Travel At Your Own Risk" warns a sign at the entrance to the road that recalls better days of its own as well as of Honey Hollow. Mr. Cadwallader's house guards the way.



Once there were many signs pointing the way to Honey Hollow. This is the only one left, now made disreputable by poison ivy.



This was a road. The forgotten people of Honey Hollow used it to go visiting. Now Ned Ridgeway is pushing down the trail.

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"A few of their descendants are around. I've seen them. I hope we can get a few of them to talk to us." Seeing was believing and we left it go at that.

We left our cars behind Mr. Cadwallader's farmhouse. It was obvious that the caretaker, while he was friendly enough, wasn't going to do any great amount of talking until he knew us better. He seemed to know George but apart from some remarks about the ridge itself, it was certain that if there was to be more, it would come later on.

"Snakes?" he repeated. "There's some copperheads, of course, but I haven't seen any so far this year. But they're around. I got one right outside the door here last year."

George said he didn't like going up in the hills after the leaves were on the trees because of snakes. "But there's one thing about a copperhead," he said, "he won't come after you first. But keep a sharp look out under foot anyway."

The road dips down beyond the Cadwallader farm and just across the bridge, we paused for enjoyment of the picnic lunches we had brought. There was a sign or two proclaiming the area on one side of the rocky road a part of the Delaware Valley Farms estate. At the foot of the hill, the brook sang merrily along. There was wild geranium all about and also much poison ivy, but we were careful, and salt baths when we arrived back home, prescribed by George, forestalled any serious consequences.

It was while we were consuming sandwiches and marveling how far we seemed to be from all the world, here in a valley not more than fifteen miles from Trenton, that we heard a voice up the trail. At intervals it seemed to be talking and now and then there were snatches of song. One thing certain, it was coming nearer. Almost at once there was silence and a man came in sight and went swinging by. His skin was like that of a mulatto. He covered his surprise at seeing us by singing out.

"Morning," he called, never once slowing his pace.

"Good morning," we replied cheerfully, although it was after one o'clock. Obviously, time meant nothing at all in Honey Hollow.

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"I know *him*," George observed, thoughtfully. "His name's Kane. He lives up the other side of the mountain. He's one of them, I think."

"One of who?" several of us asked, all together.

"The Jackson Whites," he answered casually. And George believed it.

Shortly after that we set out again, on a steady climb, some of us going on with George while others took the kit and blankets back to lock them in the cars. The road, half washed out, grew worse. No modern vehicle could have come that way although we saw the indistinct marks of hoofs and wheels of a cart. George said a lumber wagon had been that far.

We turned from the road and pushed on, still climbing, around a rocky hill. The trees were tall, the side trail almost lost in the brush. Suddenly we emerged in a clearing and as we did we passed the stone foundations of what must have been an outbuilding, a barn that may have been larger than the house.

"I found part of a treadmill in here once," said George and left us, to emerge with a section of it. "They must have used it for threshing."

In a cluster of new locust trees was the ruin of the house, the chimney jutting from the stone foundations that were well hidden by a thick growth of fern. At a corner of what once had been a garden was a choked overgrowth of raspberry canes. These were unusual raspberries, George said, recalling the time he had come there when the fruit was ripe and the canes themselves wore a hairy growth that hid the thorns. This was wild strawberry country, he told us, for on another trip he returned with what seemed to be an unbelievable quantity which Mrs. Bennett had turned into jam.

The only building that retained any of the outlines of construction predating the fire that had destroyed the house, scarring the maples and other trees, was the spring-house. The timbers of a window surmounted the stone wall and woodwork of the door, inside which the spring flowed on just as

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if the coming and passing of men were of small consequence. The fence posts outlined what once had been cultivated field but the path that led in from the mountain trail went nowhere beyond.

"Those who lived in the Hollow," George said, "were bothered little by anything outside it. They may have gone to the town we know, now and then, but I don't think they made a habit of it. You'll notice that these roads lead from the ruins of one house to another, as if the people were friendly enough with each other, probably visiting each other as Kane was doing when we saw him. That was Kane who went by us down the mountain."

"Mountain?" we echoed, as we do in the southern end of New Jersey when anyone speaks of elevations there.

"Certainly," said George, as if affronted, just as he seemed to be startled when one of us indulged in a profane ejaculation on tripping over a stone. "This is Canoe Mountain, part of the Pennington Mountains—that's all I've ever heard them called."

From the clearing we could look far out in the valley, beyond the maples, walnuts, pears and apples which were blossoming as if the farmer were there to care. Where the fence posts ended, stones divided the fields, just as they do in New England. Far away, we could see an unpainted house. George called it his "mystery house," although it lost some of its haunted mien when we passed it on another road later.

"I know the people around here mostly," our guide revealed, "and I've been in here so often that they know me. But I've never got up my nerve to talk to them over *there*. They used to have a sign warning anybody away. 'Keep out,' it used to say, and then, 'if you don't, you git it!'"

Ruins of a second house were found higher up on the trail that crosses the mountain. Once again George Bennett's deadly accuracy in striking off the path was cause for wonder. We concluded that he knew every inch of the hills and what happened later proved we were right, even though he examined a map that showed where the houses were when

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we looked for one or two he hadn't visited as a lone wolf. This time there was a walled spring beside the rock foundations.

It was Alex Garwood who called attention to a peculiar formation of rocks, in under the trees beyond the clearing of the vanished house. Large violets grew there in the shade among the stones and leaf mold. Alex decided that the rocks, seemingly arranged in a circle, indicated an old Indian council chamber, for at one end there was what seemed to be a kind of throne, or altar, built of rocks that obviously were fitted together. None of us could conceive of any natural force or phenomenon that would complete such a design. Later on, Indian authorities burst the bubble. "Glacial drift," they said.

We trudged on and then turned off the main trail on a path all but lost in the growth of many years. Not only was the going rough but much of it was boggy so that we had to balance our way on fallen limbs and jump from one dry spot to another, hoping our judgment would be right. We were amazed that this particular area could be so well watered when the countryside around was crying out for rain. It was with something of an awe of majesty that all of us paused for breath and looked up, for there ahead of us, dwarfing the tallest trees of the forest about it, was what seemed to be a gigantic white ash, a tree which, as Dr. Ridgeway declared, must have been there before the Revolution was thought of.

That consideration made us wonder about something more: Had the house, now a pile of stone beneath it, served pioneers in earliest New Jersey days? Had it been the home of settlers of Honey Hollow in days before Jackson Whites? We could not tell with absolute certainty and yet it seemed possible. The clearing was overgrown with honeysuckle.

"Watch out for the spring," warned George, "for it's all covered over."

He forgot, apparently, that he had thrust a large branch into its depths as a warning when he came that way before. None of us was moving about, however. We were still gazing up, marveling at the size of the ash which had lived on,



This lovely valley, with a brook trickling through the almost primeval floral splendor in Spring, is locked away in the hills near Honey Hollow, not from the Indian copper mine.



Like the bones that lie beneath them, even the tombstones are buried where once there was a church at the crossroads near Honey Hollow. Ned and Babs Ridgeway helped dig them out.



This darksome cave, cut deep in the hills beyond Honey Hollow, is said to have been an entrance to an Indian copper mine. But there was no one to remember more than that.



The Bear Tavern may once have been Baer, but whatever it was, there's enough to recall that here were divided two army corps for the march on Trenton.



In the midst of the almost impenetrable forest that covers the hills about Honey Hollow, this giant of the woodlands continues to guard the broken walls of a clearing that was once a farm.



Cadwallader's a grand old name in Trenton and beyond, but to find one at the edge of the Sourlands was a surprise. The caretaker's house was old, very old, survivor of all those ruins.

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despite the passage of time, despite the storms, despite the scarring fire that destroyed the house below its sheltering arms.

Pressing on and up, we came upon a house that was occupied, with a traveled road passing the door. We would have turned back at the sight of it but one or two boys had been playing around the ruins of the other house. They knew little of the countryside, we discovered, and hurrying off through the trees, emerged on the hill to tell the others at the farm of our approach. Perhaps that was why George decided to show himself. By this time we had lost count of ruined houses but George had not. Here in the barnyard where a bulky moving-van was serving as a poultry house, he pointed out the wreck of what he said was the fourth.

Somehow, we preferred the quiet of the woods and our own conversation, although there wasn't much of it. Returning toward the cellar hole under the giant tree, George led the way off to the right down a road that was truly a hall of cedars. The dogwood, blooming later than in the country outside the hollow, made a lovely picture with the deep green of the cedars for a background. There *was* a trail, surely, but it had been made by a cart that came that way for the last time many years before.

Just as we crossed a little brook, George paused, snatched his map from his pocket, briefly examined it and said, "There ought to be another house in here. I never took time to see this one but it ought to be one of the oldest."

After that, we wondered how he could know. For if methods of construction mean anything, this *was* the oldest dwelling. There was no tall ash to distinguish it, no system of a spring diverted through the cellar as there had been in the walls halfway up the hill. But here, with trees a century old reaching from the enclosure, was a house of stone with mud for mortar. We looked for bricks but found no more than a dozen of them, much larger than are used today. Some of the stones were a-tumble but three of the walls stood intact, their outline indicating what must have been a formidable home in its day.

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There might have been a clearing long ago but all trace of it had vanished. If there had been fields, they, too, were gone. The stones were hidden in maples of varying ages. The ground was blue with myrtle. George wondered if the bricks had been used in a chimney or if they had been brought by perhaps a second generation in the house, for building up the spring we found.

By now, George had concluded that we had the area he loved well in mind. But our first journey to Honey Hollow was to have a climax. Retrieving our cars, we went back to the surviving road-sign and on up the road. In one direction the way leads into Titusville. In the other, a new road used an arched bridge which for years, George said, was in the middle of a meadow with no road across it at all. It was at the corner that we lingered before turning about, for here, we were told, there was once a church.

We have grown accustomed to being told such things and then hearing how a forest fire swept away all trace. We have seen the cemetery, deep in the Pines near Old Half Way, where the board tombstones have been gnawed off almost entirely by weather and fire. But here on the corner there was no trace of a church at all. The trees that once stood there, forming a quiet grove, had been hewn down, not burned. As we walked among the stumps, we were about to conclude there had been no stones, when George pointed out several of them, among the unlettered field stones, fallen backward and covered over. We pushed the turf back from one and read the inscription:

"IN LOVING MEMORY of Mary Frances, daughter of Charles and Eliza Ann Wiley," it read, with a date in July, 1856. "Strong ties by death long since were riven," it went on, "and those I love I see no more."

This is probably a quotation but it seemed rather strange for a tombstone. Perhaps these people were so near and yet so far from the world that the Hollow, here along Fidler's Creek, instilled a special kind of melancholy. And yet, even in its desolation, the beauty of the valley, we thought, should

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have overcome that. Surely the presence of habitations and settlers didn't spoil it all.

Our journey drew near its end. Leaving the "church corner" we went down the way we had come, past Mr. Cadwallader's and close by a field where the tall wheat completely concealed the deer we saw plainly from the promontory. In spite of the approach of sunset, George maintained that he must show us the Indian copper mine, even though we would come back for a more casual examination of it. He directed us to a hill and had us leave the cars in the enclosure of a little house built into the mountainside, a place he said had not been occupied in several summers. Then, for the last time, he struck off through a lovely wood, with the purposeful mien of a man who finds trees and groundhog tunnels better signposts than maps and street names.

"There was a groundhog in here," he said, "that had tunneled out several pounds of rock." He found the place, just a moment later, observed that the little animal had dug a deeper tunnel since he was there.

"Down here in the valley," he went on, "somebody dammed up the stream years and years ago." He found that, too, and we saw it just as he had described it, a huge dam, painstakingly built of stone, at the end of one of the loveliest meadows we have had the good fortune to see. Now the brook trickles through over the rocky bottom. New trees have come and grown tall since there was a pond. When we were there, buttercups made the floor of it yellow as far as the eye could see.

On the steep slope was what appeared to be a cave. This was the copper mine. George said he had talked with many who said they were born in the neighborhood but none admitted knowing of it. "The Indians operated it, I'm sure of that," he confided. "The trouble is, there's none left to remember."

He watched us tossing stones into the yawning black mouth and listening for the splash that betrayed deep water. Alex would have lowered himself inside, feet foremost. George

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advised him not to go down, saying he would try it later, with a flashlight. "We've met no snakes so far," he said. "There's no sense looking for them down there. Come on up top. There were two direct shafts into it."

There are two well-defined cavities above the mine. From the hill we looked down again at the glory of the valley below, wondering if we would find anyone in the vicinity who could tell us about the mine and its operation. George Bennett said he had visited libraries, talked with teachers, haunted old bookshops and pried into old histories without gaining definite information. But there would be more trips to Honey Hollow and Canoe Mountain, we were sure of that. This was just a beginning.

A moment later, scaling another dust-blown trail, we passed a path that led to the hermitage of the lone wanderer we had seen on the trail, on beyond the end of the woodchoppers' path on the upper ridge, to a high lookout. It is a climb, one where George said he's watched every time he tries it in his Model T. "They're not interested in me," he explained quickly. "They just want to see if the old bus will do it."

From the top, which we were told the young folk from Titusville know well enough on moonlit nights, we gazed far away, across the hidden Delaware to Bowman's Hill and its lookout, in Pennsylvania, and then, in the opposite direction, toward Princeton. We marveled that New Jersey, in an area as close to Trenton, and to Philadelphia and New York, for that matter, could boast such open country, or such a fascinating hideaway as Honey Hollow, where the present and the past have seldom met, face to face.

We were tired and we admitted it, all of us. George stood poised, as if ready for another climb. As we thought of the journey, we knew how much of it had been his and now that we have written about it, it seems to be his story, too. That, somehow, is as it should be.

Chapter 4

FIDDLER OF FIDLER'S CREEK

"Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round . . ."

—OLIVER GOLDSMITH: 1728-1774

LONG BEFORE our second invasion of Honey Hollow, even before Andy Williams and Will Kane had told their stories, George Bennett's tracing of the Jackson Whites to the ridge across from the Pleasant Valley had begun to lose ground.

However, even as Will and Andy talked, removing the last probabilities of the legend George recounted from the way they talked about it where the last signpost caught the observant eye, a lone British soldier waited for us around the next corner, fiddle in hand, as if to contradict the implications linking Jackson Whites, Jackson Blacks and his countrymen.

George had said, with considerable certainty, that the ruins we had come upon that first day had been the homes of folk concerning whom New Jersey has pieced together a variety of stories. The difficulty seems to have been that the past, at best, was uncertain, so the present of a century ago filled the gaps. Perhaps folk repeated the little they had heard, adding plausible garnishings, as people still do. So, when George mentioned Jackson Whites, we got busy—prying loose three versions, and maybe four, before confirming the truth.

Always "certain" that the Jackson Whites had some connection with one of the famous Jacksons, those who knew little and imagined much more divided themselves into camps, one connecting them with Andrew Jackson, another with General Stonewall and a third. . . .

The first made them out to be whites and Indians and

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others who ran off with the negro slaves and servants of leading families of Hopewell, perhaps before it was Columbia, and Pennington, when it was Penny Town, romantically taking to the hills and emerging only when there was necessity. The second avowed with equal certainty that other authorities had the wrong Jackson, that Georgia was too far away to have anything to do with New Jersey to provide connection with General James. These also attacked the conclusion that Colonel Jackson, of Montessor's Island, Stillwater or even Monmouth yielded deserters in such a cause.

No, they said, the Jackson Whites were heard of first in later days. Maybe it was in Andrew Jackson's time or perhaps in General Stonewall's. However, those who mentioned Andrew were among the ones, no doubt, who think of him as living long after the Revolution was folded away. Seventh President, his memories of the war for freedom were more vivid than many others: one brother, Hugh, was killed in battle, and another, Robert, died of a wound received at the hands of a British officer while a prisoner, joining in death a heroic mother, stricken with prison fever while returning from an errand of mercy. Those who declare the Whites named for Stonewall have a campaign all figured out, the deserters hurrying from Virginia to join those who, fleeing a Civil War prison back of Easton, Pennsylvania, crossed the Delaware to snatch comely servant girls south of the Sourlands.

"George," we thought, as we talked to this one and that and went back over his story, "you started something." The details were always pleasantly hazy. Unless one looked up his Jacksons, there was a certain plausibility left untattered and one could more easily place nondescripts in Honey Hollow. George Bennett wasn't the gullible sort. He had listened to the talk of village statesmen time and again.

It was Alden Cottrell, enthusiastic assistant State Forester, who first shook his head. He admitted, with us, that there was a certain value in being green, uninitiated, for otherwise we would not have heard how the theme with variations had

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been built up. He declared, first of all, that he didn't believe there were Jackson Whites in Honey Hollow, then or ever, and that he was certain we wouldn't find any south of the Ramapos, still far away from our stamping-ground, the midlands. All sorts of stories were being recorded up in that neighborhood, he said, and the well-to-do folk living in fashionable communities in the up-State mountains were letting the world know that the reputation of the first Jackson Whites was such that they'd much prefer to forget about the whole thing.

Alden admitted, however, to hearing a third explanation, also neatly pieced together from plausible scraps. In Revolutionary days, he said, colored folk weren't darkies but jacks, and therefore the elusive hillbillies, if one can call them that, were the progeny of jacks-and-whites—there was no Jackson about it. No sooner had he disgorged this little fiction than Alden recalled picking up another, one which, however inelegant, was closer to the truth than any of the rest, but with Honey Hollow outside the reckoning. Jackson, the original Jackson, was neither general nor President by this variation, but the name of a sergeant who was in charge of a stockade where camp-followers were confined for the British soldiery. There were perhaps as many sergeants as stockades but one always approached with a "Hello, Jackson!" as a barkeep might be addressed familiarly as "Hi-ya, Joel." If one were a British officer, he rated a Jackson White. If he were just a common private, well. . . . As a reputed Anglomaniac we accepted such a story reluctantly.

Then came the crash and all the little legends went hopping. Did we say one thing leads to another? Yes, and more so. The truth came in a friendly correspondence that began with something quite apart from any of the Jacksons, any of the folk tales passed from one generation to another, down from the Ramapos to the midlands and beyond to Honey Hollow.

Doctor William J. Ellis, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Institutions and Agencies, wrote concerning some of the Forgotten Towns stories from the southern end

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of the State. In reporting a conversation concerning the Pineys, Dr. Ellis pointed out that there had been what seemed to be a slighting of the importance of the work of Miss Elizabeth Kite, which led to the establishment of the New Jersey State Colony at New Lisbon. Someone had referred to prying investigators, inferring that they had poked about, interfered, for mere nosyness. Anyone knowing the accomplishments of the Colony is certain that such a conclusion is unfair, and not in accordance with the facts.

As Dr. Ellis pointed out, Miss Kite did a most valuable work with Professor Johnstone and Dr. Goddard in days when conditions in the Pines fastnesses demanded understanding and appreciation of the problems of the folk living there then. Any research into the people left behind by communities that grew down almost overnight after the collapse of half-forgotten industries far off the beaten paths must reveal that there is no comparable situation now and surely the work of Miss Kite and her associates is largely responsible, as we were glad to tell Dr. Ellis.

Then we asked the Commissioner about the Jackson Whites, informing him of the strange explanations that were to be had, hither and yon. Well, here's the truth:

"We have a teacher at the North Jersey Training School, Miss Martha Porter," wrote Dr. Ellis, "who has done some very valuable research in this field. She tells me that about five thousand so-called Jackson Whites exist today on the mountain tops in Rockland County, New York, and in Bergen, Passaic, Sussex and Morris Counties (New Jersey). Some of them have definitely Indian features, others Italian. Others seem to be Hessian in background, and many of them use German words and phrases.

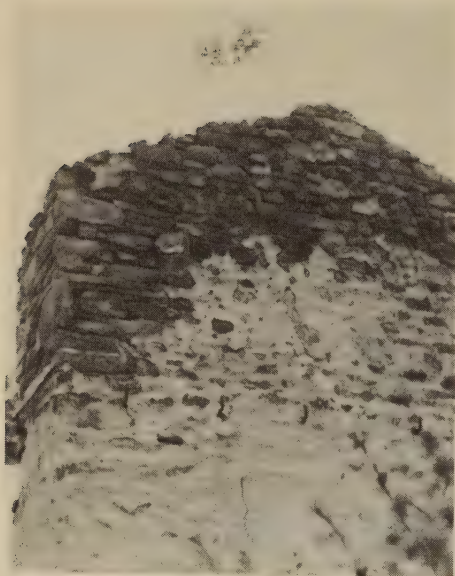
"The main influx of this group seems to have occurred when British soldiers were quartered in New York during the Revolution, and to keep these soldiers from annoying the citizens of New York, the British contracted with a man named Jackson, of London, England, for the importation of thirty-five hundred women from England. He could not get



Days before mortar was used are revealed in the stones that were the houses of Honey Hollow. Alex Garwood wondered when the trees would knock the walls over forever.



"This was a house," said George Bennett many times, as he led the way to another ruin in Honey Hollow. George and Ned Ridgeway are trying to imagine what the house was like, here where only the carefully laid stones remain.



Some of the walls of the ruined houses in the Hollow are higher than the rest but nature hangs its screen high to hide broken relics of the past. Here's a tree growing from the top of one.



Thickness of the walls of the old houses hidden away in Honey Hollow is shown in this picture, as well as how a piece of wood was used where a stone failed to fit. Compare size with auto key-case.



Only a fireside, of newer vintage than the ruined walls around it, only a — perhaps a butter churn — beside a cellar hole now occupied by a croaking frog or two. George Bennett took us to the place, in Honey Hollow, without solving the mystery.

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the required number from houses of ill repute and so resorted to kidnaping women. One of his boats went down on the way across, and as he knew he would not be paid if he did not bring over the required number, he sent to the West Indies for fifty Negro women to make up the difference.

"These people, who were quartered in the stockade in Manhattan, were released when the British fled the city in November, 1783. Accompanied by renegade soldiers, they set out across the Hudson, across the Hackensack meadows and the Saddle River, and found refuge in the Ramapos."

Thus the legend of Honey Hollow, or one of the legends, went up in smoke. Thus the official location of the habitat of the Jackson Whites unfortunately postponed the thought of immediate journeys among them. But the Whites have a Hollow of their own, at that, a kind of gateway, close by Hillburn, where the descendants of Tuscarora Indians, imported soldiers from Brunswick and Hesse Cassel who weren't much interested in a foreign war in which they were worth more dead than alive, and the negresses taken as forcibly by Jackson's agents as were the housewives shanghaied to fill twenty uncertain ships, continue to live. But Bergen, Passaic, Morris and Sussex Counties are far from Central New Jersey.

Thus we returned to Honey Hollow with the stories George had heard knocked to pieces but with those ruins of old houses as much a mystery as ever. But until we had gone back again we were unaware that within eight or nine miles of Trenton and only a few minutes' journey from Titusville and Harborton, we were to come upon someone almost as primitive and hear a yarn equally surprising. We began by turning at the surviving Honey Hollow signpost and greeting Mr. Cadwallader. Then, with both Alden Cottrell and George along, we retraced our way to the ruins of the house that had been constructed of stone with mud for mortar and afterwards to the walls of the house under the tree we had concluded was an ash. Plunging across cedar-studded fields or probing deep into the woods, we were content to listen—and learn.

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In the mud between the stones of the ruins we saw first, where the added growth of a few weeks had obscured much of what we had seen before, Alden found bits of straw. There were traces of lime on the walls of the cellar but this was probably added by occupants who had come upon the formidable house which, perhaps, was deserted for a time, while discoveries were aiding construction elsewhere outside the valley. Then, after we had traced old forsaken roads across the ridges, crossing stones piled high for fences left alone for almost a century and remarking a pile of boulders placed in a corner for a purpose still mysterious, we found again the wall under the ash—only it wasn't an ash. George had been wrong. Alden, for all his experience, had to think awhile before he pronounced it an elm, for it seemed to lack an elm's characteristics, defying all the rules of growth and appearance elms are supposed to observe.

Here again the changes of a few weeks were manifest. The forgotten iris had bloomed and gone to seed. The honeysuckle which concealed the clearing all about us had strangled all else and was doing its best to hide the dead limb George had thrust into the spring to warn the unwary wanderer. The spring itself, which George said had never gone dry, was flowing over the cobbles and rocks once patiently laid to mark the trail. Back from what had once been the dooryard of the farmhouse, red and white roses were in profusion, not wild roses, but those which once had been planted in a garden there. Near them was a giant ant hill whose inhabitants started scattering in all directions, seeking the marauder who knocked so rudely at the top of their eighteen-inch-high home.

We had begun to conclude that time might be wasted and ground lost when George headed off in the direction of another ruined farm, not far from Fidler's Creek. The day was sultry. There was no wind. Occasionally there were flashes of sunlight and then, as we crossed to the trail through more cedars and patches of yellow clover, the heat became almost unbearable. The new trail was irregular but better defined

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than many of the others we had found. Years of weather, snows melting on the mountain and rain coursing down the ruts left the stones bare and hard to walk upon. George explained why the road was easier to follow.

"They had a still going back here in the first days of Prohibition," he said.

Suddenly, hidden by clumps of blackberry canes thick with green fruit and thimbleberries equally heavy, the walls of the house loomed ahead, with two chimneys in the foreground. It is probable that the further ruin had been deserted long before the one before us was restored for illegal purposes. The chimneys were obviously of comparatively modern construction, for the marks of weatherboards were left upon them. Two vats had been fashioned from what had been left of the cellar, and each, full of murky water, boasted a large bullfrog on guard. We sought to induce the largest of the two to pose for us but he dived out of sight. We tried our luck with the second when George fastened a cricket to the end of a long blade of grass. This chap bided his time and allowed his back to be scratched with the dead cricket before taking it at a gulp and vanishing in the depths.

The walls beyond were more interesting for here the fire and collapse had left them two stories high, with one window still intact. The thickness of them was truly remarkable. From a hole in the chimney hummed a swarm of bees. Strawberries, large and sweet, grew in the cellar hole. Thimbleberries and more roses grew on every side and beyond them one could glimpse a panorama of the valley, lazy in the haze, beyond Fidler's Creek.

"You could say," said George, "that the houses in Honey Hollow were built three times—once, for the original owners, before the Revolution, later by those who came after, some time after the war was over and then, by those who occupied them last. Of course, some of them weren't used after the first pioneers went away. They raided the still, you see, more than fifteen years ago. There's a house further up the mountain on a line with these, and there, over the creek, there's another

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that's been closed up for a long time. They had to ford the creek to get to it but you can see it from the old road. I've always wanted to get over there but I never have."

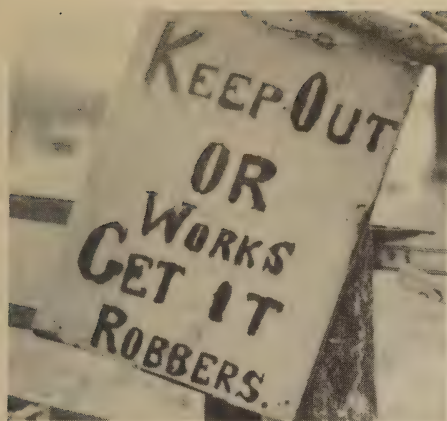
Then, and shortly after, when we talked to Andy Williams, the true character of the valley began to emerge. Honey Hollow, it was evident, served the pioneers of Pennington and Maidenhead, now Lawrenceville, and the other villages about, when Hessians and other invaders were plundering the country. The Hollow offered a refuge, apart from the world, in earliest times, just as it had done many times after.

Andy Williams was a colored man whom we found planting late corn on the edge of the area the State has set aside as Washington's Crossing Park. He had bought the little place he was farming after living up on the mountain, he said. Pausing over and over to emphasize his disclosures with a thin stream of tobacco juice, he shook his beard and said he was glad to get away from the farm on Mount Canoe.

There was some evident mystery about the fires that destroyed many of the houses we had found in ruins, but Andy was careful in what he disclosed. "Yes, they was all burned down, one after another," he said. "Them that wasn't burned was teared down. It was a shame, too."

He remembered the names of many who had lived in the abandoned farms, where fields had grown over seemingly to deny to the casual traveler that they had ever given return to those who tilled them in days that had been all but obliterated. "Where the still was?" he repeated. "Them was the Allens in there—before the still people came, that is. Then there was the Harbour place, the Vernoy's, the Brewers and the Lawyers." Where we had found the house built of stone and clay and straw—this was the Scott farm long ago, Andy told us. "I ought to know," he said. "Come August, I been here forty-eight year."

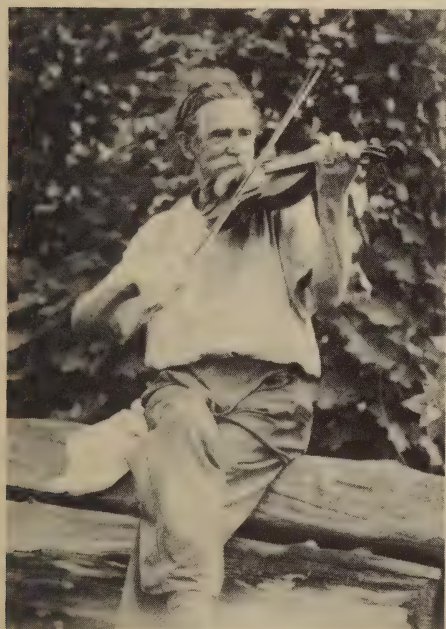
Then Mr. Williams destroyed the last shred of hope for connecting Jackson Whites with Honey Hollow. For what he said precluded anything Will Kane might offer in the way of contradiction, so that we talked to Mr. Kane later on chiefly because he had lived in the Hollow and because



This sign kept many away from Charlie's house, no doubt. Its warning remains something of an enigma. Perhaps robbers are told that if they don't keep out they may expect "the works."



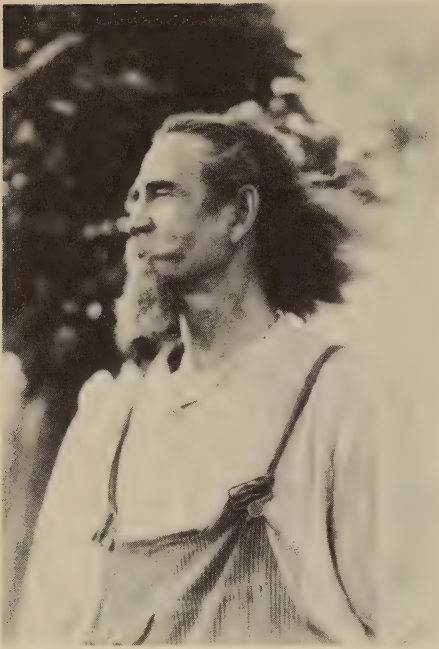
Wheels of an old cart and a water-boiler from the kitchen made a likely enough cannon, defending the home of Charlie Lennox and recalling that once he was a soldier of the King.



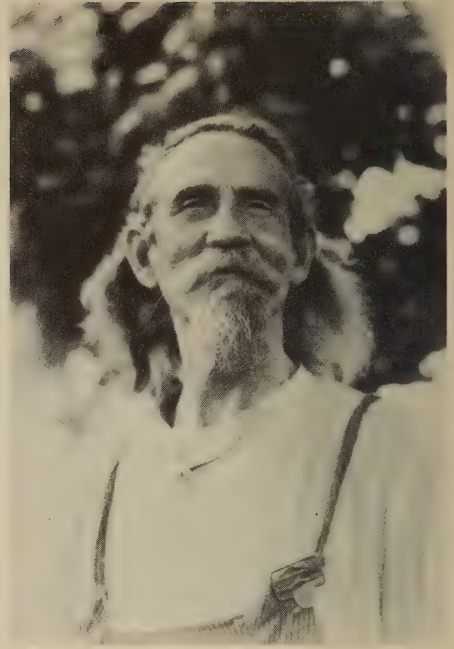
Charlie Lennox first played his violin but then he relinquished it to other hands that played an Irish jig and sent him into the house for a mysterious something in an old flour sack.



Out of the flour sack came a banjo and the barnyard concert began. That was while Charlie Lennox had his hair in plaits on top of his head.



In the long hair in which the wind played there was nothing of the Charlie Lennox dressed in a tuxedo appearing on the front page of the music he wrote.



"Let me take my hair down," said Charlie, the fiddler of Fidler's Creek, "I look better that way." And he did. "Something," he added, "like Buffalo Bill."



The adventure of Fidler's Creek was not complete until Charlie mounted the stirrupless steed which, at a command, posed upon a box.

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George Bennett had hoisted our hopes so gallantly that afternoon as we munched sandwiches on the slope. "That's one of 'em," he had said, as Will came down the mountain, talking to himself for company. And Will Kane wasn't one of them at all.

Nor was Andy Williams. "Yes," he said, "there was quite a settlement of colored people all in the Hollow there. But one after another they got weeded out. Sure, they owned the places they lived in but they just moved away and left 'em when farmin' got too hard or they want to be in the city too strong. Guess there was fifty colored families in and around Canoe Mountain in the old days. Most of 'em just took a notion they wanted to go to town."

George had been right, then, in his deductions. "Colored folk rarely build," he had said, on the way. "They'll come along where there's houses ready for 'em and they'll make nice places of 'em, too, but they rarely build. That's why I got to thinking maybe these weren't Jackson Whites after all."

It may be that the colored colony came in after the pioneers died out in the valley. But obviously, after a time, Honey Hollow lost its lure of independent living for them. The quiet of the woods became monotonous. The little stone roads led only to neighbors' houses and, always friendly, they "wanted to go to town."

"Where did they come from?" echoed Andy, as we angled for a single clue that might, at this juncture at least, explain the "Jackson" part of it. "Oh, a few come from the South. Some was born and raised here. Some was from Delaware and two families, I think, was from Virginia."

There were a few scattered Indians when he came there, Mr. Williams declared. "But they wasn't originals. They got left behind in some other places and wandered in here. They was no original Indians nearer than North Carolina. Yes, the valley's changed a lot. It used to be all rail and worm fences in the old days. Now even them is gone."

Andy came to New Jersey looking for work. He was a stonecutter. "The stone was good in those days," he said.

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"They used to cut Belgian blocks on the other side of the hill. That was in the days of the brick yard that was down yonder. Guess the last blocks I cut was in 1908—they was days when we got twenty to twenty-two dollars a thousand. There was all kinds of blocks that was wanted, then,—the Philadelphia Special, nothin' under ten or twelve inches, and others much smaller. On the smaller blocks we got thirty-eight, forty, forty-two dollars a thousand for cuttin'—we used to make fifty to a hundred dollars a week, even in them days."

Andy came from Ohio, where he was born. After that, he wandered down to Kentucky. More recently he said he had taken to "haulin' " at a dollar and a half a day. When he discovered that Alden Cottrell had come over from Lawrenceville, he said he had been a hodcarrier engaged on the construction of the school there in 1894. Asked if he thought he would spend the rest of his days on the spot, he replied:

"Guess *so*! Though you cain't never tell. There was some talk of makin' this here a sixty-five-foot road. See up there where Jack Kuser cut the mountain clear? That was part of the plan, we heard." He looked up and far away to where the timber had been once cut away and now was growing up again. "Then there was talk," he said, "of the park bein' pushed up this way and includin' us. But I guess none o' that ain't a-goin' through either just yet."

We told Andy not to worry, that he'd be there when we came back that way again. Afterward, we wondered about that, for some organized force seems to have whisked away the settlers of the Hollow. Those who didn't go willingly, voluntarily, seem to have been ejected by fire and misfortune. Those who went to the city heard of houses burned in the dead of night, or pulled down behind them, from those who moved away but a mile or two, like Andy and Will.

When we came to the house George Bennett had called his "mystery house," we passed by. There was a sign in the yard and we wondered if it was the one George had described but the car had gone by too quickly to permit the reading of it. "I never got up nerve enough to stop there," George said

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again. "There's always been a lot of furniture on the porch and a lot of people around who look like a branch of the House of David. I've talked to other people about them but they don't know much. They never come out to make friends with anybody."

One of us wanted to go back and read the sign. Alden Cottrell thought we ought to stop, on one pretext or another. We decided to stop and, if anyone was about, ask how Will Kane might be found. We pulled over in the lane.

There was a gate across it, some distance in from the road, a gate that was closed and fastened with chains. There was a sign on a tree with a rudely drawn hand, pointing toward the object it concerned. "Fish tent for sale," it said. Further on, suspended from the gate post at the left, was the sign George had described. He had misquoted it, given it more coherence. Actually the crudely lettered message was: "Keep out or Works get It." Below was a single afterthought: "Robbers." Obviously the warning was intended for intruders of evil intent and the writer meant to convey the threat that the invader would "get the works."

The house beyond was rambling, unpainted. Near the sagging porch was a chained vicious-looking dog. On the porch, beyond the bare ground of the yard, was an upright piano, almost as weather-beaten as the house—obviously it had been there some time, several years without a doubt. Scattered about was a variety of utensils, old boxes, some logs and among them wandered a blackish mare, clanking a cowbell fastened about her neck. At the end of the porch was the strangest object of all, a man, playing a violin.

He looked at us and kept on playing. Momentarily we considered that the playing had probably begun when the car stopped outside the drive and that the music was some kind of a signal understood by those inside the house, possibly engaged in some illicit task. Subsequent events dispelled such a deduction.

"Do you know where a fellow named Kane lives?" we called out.

He might have heard if he had stopped playing. We were

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obliged to repeat the question. This time he broke off the unrecognizable tune and came toward us. We gazed as if at an apparition. Were we still less than ten miles from Trenton? Or had we somehow, as we approached the gate, crossed into Kentucky or Tennessee? The stranger was hatless. On his head he had secured plaited hair as long as a woman's, using bits of white string. His face was weather-bronzed and deeply wrinkled. On his upper lip was a wild and straggly moustache and on his chin a yellow-gray beard, the same color and texture of his hair. He wore tattered dungarees, approaching us with the fiddle in one hand, the bow in the other.

"Kane," he repeated the name in a somewhat piping voice. "I don't believe I have the pleasure of knowing him."

The voice and the words he chose bore not the slightest relation to the man's appearance and surroundings. We explained that we were looking for Mr. Kane, a colored man who was supposed to live somewhere near the Hollow—that is, we explained when we had recovered sufficiently.

"You're from the old country, aren't you?" Alden asked, edging nearer the gate.

"Dublin, of course, of course," was the reply, done to a haphazard violin accompaniment. "Lennox is my name, if you please. Charlie Lennox, they call me. There's no respect for an old British Army man here at all!" And he unloosed one of the most disturbing laughs any of us had ever heard. He laughed that way as we continued to talk with him, as if for emphasis, certainly not as an expression of humor. Afterward, when other details of the interview faded from memory, we could hear that haunting sound.

Charlie looked us over pretty thoroughly. So did the horse, with a twist of the neck that rang the bell—actually, with no thought of slang. The dog tossed us a resentful glance from the end of a chain fastened to his box.

"That's a nice violin," we said.

"Yes, it is," agreed Mr. Lennox. "There's a label inside that says it's a Strad. They're usually good." We admitted they were although the label didn't fool us. We said the one-piece

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back proved it was unusual as the instrument was held out for inspection. Dublin gave us our cue and, with a bold gesture we reached out and, taking the instrument, tried an Irish jig. The violin proved sadly out of tune but nevertheless Charlie was pleased and with another of his empty laughs began whirling about, pirouetting with his hand atop that mass of plaited hair. "Ah, that's fine, that's fine," he shrilled gleefully. "You can play."

"The chin-rest is on the wrong side," we told him, tuning up and discovering the pegs turned the wrong direction.

"I like it over there," retorted the man from Dublin, now and then snatching a covert glance toward the house. "You see, I have my own chin-rest," he went on in childish jollity, as he tugged at whiskers that made him look like a somewhat wizened Buffalo Bill. He tried a march he said was Sousa's but we couldn't tell.

"Where'd you get it?" we inquired.

"Perth Amboy," he said, "in a saloon. I went in for a drag and came out with a violin."

Until then, he had been just a little wary, as if he didn't want to be, but as if he couldn't be quite sure. Then he hurried into the house, to reappear with a small Pennsylvania farm paper in which his picture appeared, with a brief caption. The likeness showed him on a horse, looking more like Buffalo Bill than ever.

"That's me stallion," he said. "He does tricks. If you have time, I'll bring him out and make him perform for you. Bred him right here myself, that I did. Born right out there in that field—such a poor, little pitiful thing you'd never recognize him now."

We continued to play the fiddle, discovering that its tone was really good. "I sent a picture like that home to *The Daily Mail*," Charlie said. "I told them if it was worth anything to them to use it. I thought I ought to have something for it since it showed what had become of Charlie. But I didn't hear a word, nor did I get the picture back. Ah, that's the psychology of things. People just don't understand."

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We had lapsed into a livelier tune and we asked him if we could take another picture. We'd save a few for him, we promised, not one, but several. He beamed. "Would you be waitin' a minute till I get me banjo?" he asked, and danced away again.

He appeared a moment later with something in a flour sack. The plaits were gone and his hair had been combed. "Sure, ye can have me picture," he said. "But I wanted to let me hair down." He was unaware that we had taken a picture or two already. "Now, we can have a duet maybe," he went on, pulling the banjo from the sack, the pick from a folded piece of toilet paper.

The concert might not have been artistic and the sounds we made may have been decidedly sour, for it was difficult to recognize the tunes he plucked from the raucous strings, but Charlie was thoroughly delighted. He sat on a fallen tree, having vaulted the chained gate to be on our side. After an interlude, he laughed and said:

"That's better than the stuff and nonsense they have on the air, isn't it, now? I won't have a radio in the place. Maybe I'm alone a lot and maybe a radio would keep me company but I don't like 'em. They destroys talent, that's what they does; they destroys talent."

We asked him about the sign and he said something about rough characters in the neighborhood. The valley wasn't what it used to be, he said. "No privacy at all. You got to warn 'em off all the time. But I know gentlemen when I see 'em, don't you think I don't. See that cannon?"

He pointed beyond a barbed-wire fence to the right of the gate, beside a weed-grown field. It wasn't a cannon. It was a water-boiler mounted on two discarded wheels of a farm cart. From a distance it might have looked like an artillery piece. Charlie was certain it would, anyhow. "Adds a sort of military touch," he confided. "There's psychology in that."

There was a line of tall poplars bordering an avenue leading down from the gate past the unpainted house. One had been seared from top to bottom by lightning. "One of your trees was struck, wasn't it?" we asked.

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"Yes, just the other night," said Mr. Lennox. "And that's a funny thing, too—people have an idea lightning comes out of the sky. They're wrong. It comes up out of the ground and meets what's coming down halfway. I know. I've seen it. It's all the time meeting with a bang like that around here. Last year it come up and got my dog—right over there."

Charlie asked us to wait while he took his mare away and then came riding from beyond the trees on the stallion. He posed again and again, confident that he cut quite a figure. Somehow, for all the oddity of the scene, one of us holding the banjo, another the violin and Alden the camera, he made an imposing appearance. He dismounted after his pet had mounted a box at his command, to show how he would pick up a broom and a feed pan when told to perform. George was asked inside the gate long enough to put the box in place and as he did he caught a glimpse, he said, of an untidy kitchen, with a wood-stove in the midst, surrounded by innumerable pots and pans and unwashed dishes. Once the stallion made a lunge at George and once, when Charlie had bent over, he bared his teeth above his master's neck.

"He's a devil when he has a mind," Mr. Lennox declared.

"Do you farm here, Mr. Lennox?" one of us asked suddenly.

Charlie didn't answer for a moment, looking at us sharply. "I don't own this place," he said. "I caretake." There was a finality about the reply that closed another gate and fastened it with chains as formidable as those slung around the sagging barrier beside us. Before the old soldier could remount, he had to ask help and, to relieve the sudden tension, we told him the violin bridge was all wrong and we would bring him another. He seemed pleased. Then, after taking violin and banjo into the house, he sat astride the horse, as if listening at the edge of a prairie. Instead, it was the near-at-hand far-away of the edge of the world outside. With a shout and another laugh that seemed to cut through each one of us, he rode out of sight, his long hair streaming behind him in the rising wind.

What remained of the journey came as an anticlimax, by

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comparison. We found Will Kane and Mrs. Kane and a girl of fourteen, perhaps, dressed in boy's clothes—at least she appeared to be a girl, although she spoke never a word. Off the road that climbs to the lookout clearing on Mount Canoe, we found them outside their little cabin, in a tiny flower garden, taking their ease. Mr. Kane we remembered well from that time he passed us on the crossing road, perhaps on his way to call on Andy. Mrs. Kane was a large woman, her skin even lighter than her husband's. They didn't remember anything unusual about Honey Hollow or why everybody continued to call it "Honey Holler" through the years.

No, they said, they didn't come from Virginia, or Maryland either. They were always there. Once they lived at that farm under the large elm, alias the ash, that goes on living there, but that was a long time ago. There were changes in the Hollow and in the Valley, too. Nobody was taking care of the roads any more.

We rode across the hills to Harbournon. It had grown late, but even so, it remained sultry. Seeking refreshment in the tiny store on the corner when George turned about after discovering the old creamery had closed, one question led to another and then, without any special point, to ancestors in general. When a patron who had wandered in confessed himself a direct descendant of John Carver and the proprietress said that was nothing, she was a lineal kin of Sir Francis Drake, we decided that the store and its story would serve another day.

Once we went back to see Charlie, however, taking a box of rosin and a better violin bridge. This time we found him in shorts, a tiny knitted cap at the back of his head. Alden Cottrell brought him some pictures. We tried to find out more concerning the years between Dublin, days in the service of His Britannic Majesty, and the present—and gained very little. But the surprise was saved for the last.

"One of the park guards told us you wrote a song," Alden said.

FIDDLER OF FIDLER'S CREEK

"Song?" Charlie repeated, brightening. "I've written dozens of them. Wait a minute, will you?"

He dashed into the house. A moment later he appeared with some music. Imagine our feelings when he presented each of us a copy, borrowing a fountain pen to autograph them in a jerky hand, "Compliments of Charles J. Lennox."

Beside his signature was the likeness of Al Smith when he was Governor of New York, campaigning for the Presidency. In a smaller oval was the likeness of a man in formal clothes, smooth-shaven. The title of the song sprawled between the pictures: "Democrats March Song: The Democrats," by Charles J. Lennox. On the back was "C. J. Lennox. Author of: Poems, Songs, Marches, Recitations, etc., etc., etc. Open to Entertain by Contract. Address: 92 Warren Street, Carteret, N. J."

Oh, no, this wasn't Charlie, we said. And yet, it *was*. This man with the beard and the long flowing hair, this man whom we had interrupted as he fiddled in lonely recital off there in the mystery house of the hills, and this man in the wing collar and the tuxedo with broad satin lapels—were one and the same. The past had caught up with the not-so-long-ago and the recent had become the present. Or perhaps it was that Charlie Lennox was after all like the old houses in the Hollow and along Fidler's Creek, the broken walls with trees and brambles growing from the midst.

Chapter 5

RECROSSING AT CROSSWICKS

"Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tombs no trophies raise . . ."

—THOMAS GRAY: 1716-1771

FROM ALMOST the very moment of the recalling of the traveling cannon ball of Crosswicks, odd rumbling came from that section of upper Burlington County.

There were some who said the wrong people had done the most talking. There were others who claimed that our informants, unaware of the facts, made some stories better than they should have been. Others said there was a great deal more to Crosswicks than any had chosen to reveal.

Miss Charlotte Rogers, whose home had been Crosswicks, brought the good-natured complaints as far south as Riverton. However, objections soon were lost in a Crosswicks we had never heard about. There was the man who rode in a carriage with his five wives. There was the parade in which so many took part that there was no one left to watch. And there was the Quaker preacher who once had loved to dance and—

But wait! That story of the cannon ball must be cleared up first of all. The version given us first was that the ball remained in the wall of the old meeting house years after it had been deposited there in a skirmish at the bridge; then, suddenly, it vanished. It was replaced later on where the cannon had left it, they said, when the man who had taken it home for safekeeping finally died. In the interim a reporter had been assigned to find and write about the ball in the wall and had been doubted upon returning with the assertion that the ball was not there.

In the main, that story was accurate enough. Now, however, there are names and details to add to it. The meeting house standing in Crosswicks today, splendid example that it

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is, is the third to stand on the site. Thomas Foulke, Samuel and John Bunting, Frances Davenport, Thomas Gilberthorpe, Thomas Lambert, William Satterthwait, William Black and Samuel Taylor were the leaders of those who, "instead of going west as most did, came east and took up the rich lands along Crosswicks Creek."

The quotation is from a record of Joseph Middleton, whose Crosswicks home was a station on the Underground Railroad. Gordon spells the first name of Crosswicks in what he says was the original, the Indian Clossweeksung. The Barber and Howe *Historical Collections* appends a list of definitions of Indian names and in defining Crosswicks says: "Criswicks Village—The house of separation. It was the custom among the Indians to cause their young women at certain periods to separate themselves from the men, and go to a hut made for their reception at some distance, and there to remain a certain number of days, before they were permitted to return. One of these places was upon a high bank of the creek where the village now is, and hence the name of the creek." This is as far as any historian could hope to go, with any delicacy, but it should end, once and for all, the silly explanations of "a divided creek" or "a place of women." Every Indian village had such a hut, says Dorothy Cross, a well-known authority, the distinction going to Crosswicks only because the name recalls the custom.

When Mr. Middleton recorded his recollections, the cannon ball was not in place. "Did thee see the imprint of the four-pound cannon ball in the brick wall, just above the second floor?" he is quoted as asking his interviewer years ago. "When the British were on their retreat from Philadelphia in June, 1778, a detachment sought to cross the bridge over Crosswicks Creek just within the village. The Americans had a small battery of four-pounders stationed on the north side of the creek and drove them back the first day. But on the second day they returned in force and gained a passage. In the melee the Americans fired three shots, two of which went through the roof and one into the wall."

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Often the stories heard at Crosswicks say that the ball, now safely back in its place, is British, and that is wrong, you see. The ball, said Mr. Middleton, "stayed where it struck until some fifty years ago when it was taken out by Samuel Middleton, who climbed up while workmen had a scaffold raised to put on a new roof and removed it surreptitiously. I have been trying to have it put back as a valuable and interesting relic for a number of years. It is now in the possession of Frank Ellis who, no doubt, would give it up for so laudable an object."

Whether Mr. Ellis gave it up or not doesn't matter. The ball is back where it was from the Revolution to the Civil War and Mr. Middleton's ghost can be at peace. "I can remember," Miss Rogers said, "when the ball was a doorstep in Frank Ellis's home. I can remember Morris Lippincott getting up on the scaffold to put it back for the 150th anniversary. That *was* a feature performance!"

Today, the site of the bridge at which the skirmish took place in that early summer of 1778 would be difficult to find unless one asked more information than that supplied by the historic sites marker on the main road some distance away. The old Revolutionary bridge stood until 1832 when it gave place to a covered wooden structure placed on the same foundations. This remained until 1908 when the present concrete span was erected several yards further down. The old crossing is plainly seen from the new although it is hardly as picturesque as the old covered bridge, remembered by only too few.

Some will deny there was a covered bridge at all. Some will say there was only one and not three cannon balls. It's the old story of denial because of uncertainty. It is like the story which newcomers at Crosswicks tell, that the village gained its name from an Indian Chief of the area who even on his good days was extraordinarily cross!

Some will deny that the big oak in the meeting-house yard is in any way remarkable. And yet—"about the big oak," wrote Mr. Middleton long ago, "we claim it is the largest in

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New Jersey although there is one in the yard of the Friends meeting house in Salem which, they claim, is larger than ours. I measured ours the other day and have sent to a friend in Salem to measure theirs, with a view of comparing measurements. Ours measures, three feet from the ground, seventeen and one half feet in girth. The spread of its branches is one hundred and twenty-two feet, and its height eighty-two feet. I haven't a doubt but that it was standing when the Indians were roaming the forests."

What results Mr. Middleton gained from his comparison of measurements will never be known. But the assertion is often heard that there have been a number of large oaks and other trees discovered which compare favorably, if they do not outstrip, the boasts of the Salem giant and its ardent defenders. Despite the passage of time, there remains under the present meeting house a stump, the relic of an oak which, if it was not the parent of the one referred to by Mr. Middleton, was at least an older brother. This one, those who have crawled under have declared, measures at least eight feet across. That would thrust its rise long before the Indian name for Crosswicks, long before the trail the Red Man trod to become the winding street of the quaint, cosy little town today, long before an invading white man was dreamed of.

Crosswicks seems to have had a way of concerning itself with historic events. Although the skirmish at the bridge commends itself to ardent patriots, what Mr. Middleton called "the chief claim of Crosswicks to national fame" is missed altogether. This is the fact that Crosswicks was an important "station" on the celebrated "underground railroad" by which early Abolitionists aided fugitive slaves to escape to Canada.

"It is well known," Mr. Middleton said, "that the Friends of New Jersey and Pennsylvania were hearty supporters of it, if indeed they did not originate it. Their 'station' in Crosswicks was the fine mansion of Enoch Middleton, standing very much today as it stood then, on the north bank of the Crosswicks Creek, the first house on the right as one crosses the bridge on the way to Trenton."

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Enoch Middleton was, at that time, a retired Philadelphia merchant who had become imbued with the principles of the Abolitionists. He was a friend and almost daily associate, personally or by correspondence, with Isaac T. Hooper, Lucretia Mott and others of the inner circle in Philadelphia. Enoch and his twelve children actively engaged in the dangerous enterprise. His youngest son, Rudolph, was a conductor on the "railroad" and a few in Crosswicks today recall his stories.

Rudolph Middleton was proud of his father. "My father retired from business in Philadelphia about 1836," he once wrote. "He was worth ninety-five thousand dollars, which was quite a sum in those days. He bought that beautiful corner site and built the dwelling you can see now, then by far the finest in all the countryside. The news got out that a rich Quaker from Philadelphia was building a fine mansion on Crosswicks Creek and people drove out from as far as Trenton and Bordentown to look at it. There it stood, fronting both ways, a portico on each front, four chimneys, dormer windows in the roof. What do you suppose it cost? Four thousand dollars! It would cost ten thousand today. Father had it built by day work at a dollar and a quarter a day, fifteen hours a day in summer time."

The Underground Railway had various routes. One was from Delaware Breakwater, along the Delaware River to Bordentown and across New Jersey by way of New Brunswick or Allentown to New York. This route handled slaves mostly from Maryland and Virginia. There were "stations" every thirty miles or so where the runaways were concealed by day and passed along to the next "station" by night. "It was a pretty efficient system everywhere," said Rudolph, who had been one of the officials, "but I think the machine was better oiled among the Friends and so worked more smoothly."

Enoch Middleton was an Abolitionist to the core. It was natural that his new house in Crosswicks should become "one of the most important and popular stations from the Breakwater up." "Mother disliked it," Rudolph recalled in speak-

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ing to a friend one time. "The tremendous risks Father ran kept her in agony of fear and apprehension most of the time. 'Father,' I've heard her say again and again, 'thee'll have us all sold out here—let's quit!' 'I'll never quit!' Father would reply. 'The poor creatures are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and I'll never quit.'"

Usually the runaways came to Enoch Middleton's house in groups of three, four or five. Rudolph once recalled a time when there were thirty-two in hiding at one time. Enoch would conceal them during daylight and at night either take them himself or send them to Allentown, Cranbury or New Brunswick. In later years he grew bolder still and guided them by day.

"I was a conductor on the route at eight," Rudolph remembered. "It happened in this way: We had an old darkey retainer named Ed McClow, who had one failing. He would get drunk if sent off alone. Father tried sending him with the fugitives but generally the team would come back alone, having spilled Ed out somewhere on the road. Ed was devoted to me, and Father, in spite of Mother's tears and protests, hit upon the plan of sending me with him. It worked to perfection, for the old reprobate, having me to care for, wouldn't touch a drop!"

Enoch was secretive about the plans he made and what he knew of all that was happening around him. Rudolph said that the children rarely heard the Underground Railroad mentioned. Enoch would open a letter, read it, give his wife a wink and throw it in the fire. The old house in which those dramatic scenes were staged and which, today, stands much as it did then, was the Crosswicks host to the leaders of the system.

Lucretia Mott was often there. "She was a great woman, whether as preacher, lecturer, poet or writer," Rudolph wrote of her. He remembered her at the old house on visits to his father and mother. "In her old age, I remember," he said, "she was timid about sleeping alone and when she came to see us Mother would sleep with her."

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On only one occasion is there a record of Enoch Middleton's having had personal contact with the slave masters. That was in the late Forties when a negro named Lou Sittles came up from the South. He was a bold, daring fellow and hung about Crosswicks several days although Enoch had made arrangements for him to push on. Finally he went to Canada but he only stayed a year. He liked Crosswicks so well he came back and got a job in a slaughterhouse across the creek.

Lou had been working six months when his master heard about it and, accompanied by the Burlington County sheriff from Mount Holly, went to the slaughterhouse to serve the warrant. Sittles was there, dressing beef. In less time than it takes to recount it, he knocked his former master down, threw the sheriff over the gate and, bolting out the back door, swam the creek and ran to Enoch Middleton, almost dead from his sudden show of spirit which, after the wetting, mingled with fright.

"Oh, Enoch," he cried, "they're after me, they're after me!"

Enoch Middleton had a barn full of new-mown hay and with it he covered the shaking negro. Then he put on his coat and sauntered down to the end of the lane next to the bridge, where, as he expected, the master and the sheriff soon appeared. The officials marched across the covered span. "We have papers to search your property for a runaway slave, Lou Sittles," said the erstwhile master.

Enoch stood, with his right hand under his coat as if he carried a weapon there. Mrs. Middleton was certain the hour she feared had come. She stood in the doorway of the house atop the rise, crying. "Don't thee set foot on my property," ordered Enoch. They parleyed there for half an hour without gaining a foot. Finally, the sheriff and his companion went away. They knew, certainly, that the sheriff of Burlington County had no authority in Mercer and the creek was the dividing line.

"What would thee have done," Rudolph recalled his mother asking his father, "if those men *had* set foot on thy land?"

Enoch Middleton shrugged. "I should have let them come," he replied.



This house, still standing at Crosswicks, served as a station on the Underground Railroad.



What the best dressed gentlemen of Crosswicks wore in earliest days is shown by Gabriel Middleton. A huge hat and knee-breeches went well with the strong face that proclaimed its owner a principal citizen in the old town.



Rudolph Middleton, of Crosswicks, was a conductor on the Underground Railroad when his father's house was a station. He used to tell one of the unusual stories of an enlistment when he went off at eighteen to the Civil War.



Joseph Middleton was a dashing gentleman of fashion at Crosswicks as his habiliments declare. But his was a far different Crosswicks from that known by the present.



The old covered bridge at Crosswicks. The section for vehicles, where travel "at faster gait than a walk" was met by a fine, bears the date of 1855, and the addition for pedestrians 1866.



Crosswicks once was known for a spring of crystal water, proclaimed far and wide as the "Free For All." Soldiers camped along the road one night and the spring, they say, was ruined for all time.



Crosswicks, named Crossweeksung by the Indians, has many old houses: this is the ancient oven in the oldest of them.

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He knew that the invaders would lose no time in making a return visit and so he busied himself with getting Sittles off the premises. "We had a horse called 'Old Yaller' that Father had bought from two strangers for twenty-five dollars," Enoch's youngest son remembered, years afterward. "He hadn't a hair on his tail but he could go like a streak. We hooked him up, Father routed Sittles out of the hay mow half dead with the heat and bleached nearly white from fear, and started him on the road to New Brunswick without waiting for nightfall. That was the only time we had any appearance of trouble."

Old Enoch lost sixty-five thousand dollars, it was estimated, in a few years after leaving Philadelphia, through endorsing papers for friends and relatives. He never "lost" anything because of the slaves he helped except in considerable sums he gave them from time to time. "They would come to us ragged, starving, without a cent," Rudolph said, "and I have seen Father give them five dollars before starting them on their journey, as well as a suit of clothes. Some special Providence seemed to protect him in his breaking of the laws."

Rudolph Middleton had his own story and he liked to tell it in his last years. "I must tell you about my enlistment," he used to say, "because it shows what manner of man my father was. There were nine of us young fellows who ran away to Bordentown and enlisted because we were afraid our fathers would refuse consent if we asked them." They were all good soldiers, Rudolph remembered, in days when he was the last of the nine on earth. "We were assigned to the Twelfth New Jersey Volunteers, Company B. We were all under age and I was just eighteen. In two days we were ordered to Woodbury to join our regiment."

As they were about to leave for battle, Rudolph got leave and seized upon the twenty-four hours to return to Crosswicks and bid his parents good-bye. "I was two hours in the parlour saying good-bye to Mother," the old soldier recalled that day of his youth. "I was the youngest and it was pretty hard for her, I guess. 'Mother,' I said, 'I don't dare bid Father good-bye. I enlisted without his consent and I'm afraid he'll

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cuff me.' 'Son,' said she, 'go and bid thy father good-bye.' "

Rudolph found his father setting out cabbages. "I can see him now as though it were but yesterday," he said, when he had returned to spend many years in the old village. "I was in soldier clothes and, trembling all over, I marched up and said, 'Father, I have enlisted without asking thee.' He lifted himself up without saying a word, as straight as a ramrod. 'Yes,' he said, 'thee ran off and enlisted without a word to me about it!'" "

There were tears in Enoch's eyes. He took his son by the hand.

"Rudolph," he said, "I want to give thee fair warning. Don't thee ever come back home shot in the back!"

"That was the kind of man my father was," said Rudolph, an old man, recalling the incident to his friends. "His religious principles made him a man of peace. Just the same, if I was to be shot, it must be with my face to the enemy. I often thought of that in the next three years. My regiment was in thirty battles and I was in twenty-eight of them. At the battle of Cold Harbor our corps was forced to retreat before a superior force and with the bullets singing around me I remember thinking, 'If I should get shot in the back, I wouldn't dare go home!' Several other times the same thought came to me—but I wasn't shot. I might have been, at Chancellorsville or Gettysburg, but I missed them. I was sick in a Washington hospital."

The records of all these things were found in the old Middleton house, where slaves were once quartered in the attic when the barn was full. Edwin Alexander Newbold lived there when we hurried to Crosswicks one sultry June Sunday, in response to Miss Rogers' invitation. Mr. Newbold's wife was Clara Middleton, daughter of Joseph. Miss Rogers had arranged a picnic, with various members of the family ready for an excursion to a shady corner, the site of an old schoolhouse. "You must meet Uncle Edwin," she said, "even if he won't come along on the picnic. Just listen in and you'll hear all sorts of interesting things."

Since Mr. Newbold won't mind being called "Uncle Edwin"

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and since it sounds so much friendlier, that's what he'll be. As we talked to him his daughter was producing forgotten samplers and books from far corners of the famous old house. One sampler, unframed, was signed Phoebe Ann Chapman. Another, bearing the name of Phebe Willits, gave her birth date as September 10, 1797, and carried out, with the conventional alphabetical and numerical design, the rhyme beginning, "Jesus, permit thy gracious Name to stand . . ."

Suddenly someone was talking of the old spring, crystal clear, which once celebrated old Crosswicks. It was surrounded by a wooden barrier on which was painted the inscription, "Free For All." Travel wasn't hurried in earlier days and little dust whirled up from such vehicles as went by. Not that Crosswicks was intending to fight the encroachment of modern times, for almost at the beginning of the automobile age three intrepid motorists emerged, Dr. Charles L. Dye, Jack Braislin and Edgar Brick, dusters, goggles and all. Uncle Edwin remembered the spring, however, when it not only appeased the thirst of the casual passer-by but also inspired a sermon by a parson who at once changed the topic of another he had previously prepared.

"But there's only a drain there now," he said sadly. "The platform's gone. The spring was all smashed up during the World War when soldiers from Camp Dix put up their tents in a near-by field. I raised harry about it and the officers said they would fix things back the way they were, but they never did."

The "Free-For-All" spring of old Crosswicks is lost forever, victim of a war-time free-for-all.

Even Uncle Edwin called Scrabbletown "Scrappletown" as he cast doubts on the repeated explanation that Pointville once was Scrabbletown and that the name once was Scrambletown because of a scrambling of the roads there. Then, suddenly, he rattled off a great many names which, if they were ever on maps, disappeared quickly with few to remember them.

"There was Comical Corner, near Pemberton," he said. "And there was Fiddler's Green, on the road from Pemberton

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to Vincentown—I used to go there with Father to cut wood. There were only a few shacks and the Piney children ran barefoot in the snow. There was another place we used to call Sheep Pen, on the road from the shore to Forsythe's Bog. Then there was Froggie's, and Duke's Park, too."

It was apparent that a love of the pine country was heart-deep in Uncle Edwin, for as he talked his eyes grew dreamy as if he had been carried far away to where the warm air was pungent and the scent of the cedar water mingled with it to instill a feeling that nothing temporal really mattered very much.

Just at this point, one of us came upon the name of Still in a tattered old book loaned for examination. It was a thick book, dictionary-size, with a sandy-brown cover on which were the gold letters "U.G.R.R." It proved to be *The Underground Rail Road* by William Still. Subtitled "a record of facts, authentic narratives, letters, etc., narrating the hardships, hairbreadth escapes and death struggles of the slaves in their efforts for freedom, as related by themselves and others, or witnessed by the author, together with sketches of some of the largest stockholders, and most liberal aiders and advisers of the road," the reading of it made us pause for breath and then recall Dr. James Still, whose life and cures meant so much to the pine country in his time. The book, published in 1872 by Porter & Coates, is chock-full of material on the illicit philanthropy that made it so appropriate a find in the old Middleton house.

As we hurriedly thumbed the pages, we came upon the account of Peter Still, the hero of Mrs. Kate E. R. Pickard's chronicles of 1856, and of Charity Still, who twice escaped from slavery. Struck by the fact that Charity and her two children are pictured as fleeing to Burlington County, to be joined later by her husband, we could but wonder if Enoch Middleton had known them and if he had had some part in their reunion. At the same time we spoke of old Dr. Still, whose story Warner Hargrove found for us, and we wondered what his kinship was. We spoke of his marvelous cures and how even the doctors who opposed his gaining credentials

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came to him for relief at the end—and that brought up mention of Crosswicks' own herb doctor.

He was a German and his name was Dr. Moke—pronounced “Mokey” by his request. His work in the village is recalled by many who live there now. He could talk little English and understood little more. However, that made little difference with his patients whom he seemed to diagnose with a knowing glance. Those who were ill would try to reveal something of their symptoms. Whether he could not understand, or whether he did not want to hear, or whether some hidden power gave him immediate knowledge of what the ailment was, is uncertain. However, he would end conversation in the little house where his sister kept house for him, making an impatient gesture and saying, “Me know—me know!” The prescription would follow, probably already prepared and measured off in bottles. Often it was a mysterious potion steeped from the boiling of tiger lilies!

Miss Rogers, first of all, told the story of the man with the five wives in his carriage and later, her brother, Howard M. Rogers, who lives in Crosswicks, confirmed it. However, schoolteachers are noted for their accuracy when it comes to tales like this and confirmation came unsolicited. “This one’s too good to miss,” declared Miss Rogers,—and she was right.

The man was Stacy Taylor, gone from Crosswicks these many years. Wherever he is, God rest him, for with five wives about him he needs divine guidance. Stacy had had four wives, it seems, and all had been buried at the time of their death, after the usual services. It may be that they were laid to rest in different burying grounds and that would add logic to what came after—but the story doesn’t run that way. As far as Miss Rogers could determine, the bodies were in a Methodist Cemetery and Stacy decided to move them to that of the Friends on the Crosswicks-Robbinsville Road.

By this time Mr. Taylor had persuaded a fifth unattached female to become Mrs. Taylor, which is either a compliment to all four predecessors or an indication of hope that a new incumbent might prove more durable. All that is uncertain, as is Stacy’s motive for taking up what was left inside four

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black coffins and depositing them elsewhere. The legend is that Stacy drove the carriage in which the relicts of four wives had been placed and that the new Mrs. Taylor went along for the ride. There is every indication that he did the grave-digging job himself!

We have looked in vain for the proof we might discover, such as it would be, in six gravestones. However, the tastes of the Friends seldom run to imposing markers and it is not strange that we have had no success. What a strange procession that must have been! It was sufficiently sinister, you see, to make the village remember it all this while. Whatever Stacy's idea was is as cloaked in cemetery mist as the thought behind the decision of Mrs. Stacy No. 5 to go along. Perhaps she wanted to be certain that her husband, determined to reclaim his former helpmeets, would put them back where they belonged!

Before the enactment of the public school law, Crosswicks maintained three sectarian schools, one by the Methodists and two by the Friends, the last of which was continued by the Orthodox group until 1901. There were once four mills operating in and about Crosswicks, Thomas Lambert building the first in 1679; by 1736 all four were going in a four-mile area. There was a tannery near the gristmill in early days, for John Middleton in his will, made in 1710, speaks of himself as a tanner. As late as 1850, the tannery was still in the family, Edward Middleton being recorded as its operator.

There is a legend in Crosswicks that the Provincial Council or Assembly met there under a tree, pointed out as still standing on the DeCou farm. The first Legislature of New Jersey, as your informant will probably call it, met in Crosswicks in 1756-1757 to examine the causes of, and suggest cures for, increasing intoxication among the Indians. This may have been the group of legislators who met beneath the tree but if it is, and if the months usually mentioned are accurate, perhaps there was a longing for some of the spirits which the Indians were accused of imbibing.

If the tree session was in 1716 and the month April, that

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would not have been so bad, and there might have been some reason for meeting out-of-doors, for the meeting in Crosswicks had been adjourned from Burlington because of a small-pox epidemic. At the other meeting referred to, in the Fall of the same year, there must have been some shivering between laws if the gathering had a tree for shelter, for adjournment did not come until January 17, 1717. No, the meetings must have been in the old meeting house, for history says some beneficial laws were passed.

No one seems to know who was the first tavern keeper in the village but everybody knows that John Bainbridge kept an inn that was forced out of business because he sold liquor to the Indians on the sly. Stories of old inns and their hosts have a peculiar fascination in the Crosswicks neighborhood where, today, the forces of temperance placard the roadsides with warnings as to what happens to those who imbibe. One public house, known much later as Stead's Hotel, offers a whole series of interesting minehosts, John Douglass, in 1776, who was succeeded by his son, Benjamin, until 1804, when William McKnight took over. John Horsfu, Jacob Keiner, Richard Pierce and Joshua English had their turn, to be followed by *Amog* Robbins, a widow, who married Samuel Wilson, whose daughter married Joseph Stead, an Englishman, who bought the place and gave it a new name.

Stead's Hotel, with "The Bird In Hand" near by, and the Red Tavern and Buttonwood Inn down the road, cast long shadows out of the past, reaching from Crosswicks to where, along the Bordentown Road, what at first appears to be a series of shaving-cream advertisements turns out to say, however disjointedly, "Liquor Destroys the Finest and Best in Man."

Not given as much attention as it should have and as once was given it when firemen's parades were more frequent, is the ancient hand engine the Crosswicks Fire Company bought shortly after its organization in 1822 from a pump concern in Seneca Falls, New York. Of more use than historic value in those days and in as good condition today as it ever was,

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it turned out to be equipment dated 1744, first used by the Union Fire Company, No. 1, of Philadelphia, organized in 1736, formed through the efforts of Benjamin Franklin. Several of the original buckets, made of leather and inscribed "Un. Fire Co. No. 1, Phila. 1744," are part of the equipment Crosswicks folk have been taught to venerate, even though the purchase may have been part of an old-time trade-in.

Scenes have changed since then, the covered bridge has been taken away, many have come and gone. But the old Middleton house, Uncle Edwin Newbold's when we were there, is much the same as it was before the Civil War. The third meeting house presides in what, even in this section of New Jersey, appears to be "the common." The streets, lined with quaint houses of yesteryear, bend and twist with the turnings of the Indian trail that ran along the creek bank.

"But," as Miss Charlotte said, "there's a lot more to Crosswicks than you knew, a great deal more than the world will ever believe. Much has happened here that Crosswicks set store upon, marveled at, laughed about. Take the time the Community House was dedicated. They were going to lay the cornerstone and a big celebration had been planned. That was after the war, in 1921.

"Word came that the body of Harry Chapman, Crosswicks' only casualty of the war, would arrive from France that week. The committee decided to make the burial a part of the program. A band was signed up. A squad of soldiers was engaged, with a gun caisson on which to place the body for the procession to the Friends Cemetery. Everybody was dressed up and waiting in line for what seemed to be hours."

Miss Rogers smiled as she neared the climax. "I shouldn't laugh, I know," she said. "But would you believe it, so much of Crosswicks was in the parade that there was no one left to watch the parade go by? And did you know that the excitement was too much for Uncle Edwin's cows? They all jumped the fence and ran away! We had to leave the ice cream at the Community House to go out and hunt for them!"

Chapter 6

FROM HERBERTS TO HARBOURTS

"Touch us gently, Time!

We've not proud nor soaring wings:

Our ambition, our content

Lies in simple things.

Humble voyagers are we,

O'er Life's dim, unsounded sea,

Seeking only some calm clime:—

Touch us gently, gentle Time!"

—BRYAN WALLER PROCTER: 1787-1874

THE LITTLE crossroads village of Harbourton became a challenge the moment we paused there at the end of a day's journeying and the good lady tending store began matching ancestors with her unexpected patrons.

After that it became evident that redoubtable Mr. Gordon was in some disagreement with the very appearance of the place. The store itself, at least one end of it, reached back into the middle 1700's. The tiny church across the road stood sentinel before ancient stones that marked the resting place of pioneers who had been there at the beginning, Quicks, Reeds, Stouts, Peirsons, Martindells, Mershons, Hills and Eges, folk whose descendants still live there quietly in the Hopewell hills. It may be that there are Harbours, or even Harbors, in the graveyard there but we could not find them.

Then suddenly the map in the *Gazetteer* revealed a name which had been there all the time—Herberton. Derby in England is Darby in this country, the spelling having approximated the pronunciation. It seemed plausible that Herberton, in the midst of country whose soil was first tilled by Englishmen, had become Harbourton by the same procedure—because that was the way it had been pronounced through the years. Sure enough, the *Gazetteer* which disclosed no Harbourton, the name plainly lettered on the old store and Post Office, listed a Herberton.

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"Herberton" (it read) "town of Hopewell t-sp. Hunterdon co., 11 miles South of Flemington, 11 North from Trenton; contains some half dozen dwellings, a Baptist church, store, and tavern; the country around it is hilly, with soil of red shale, well cultivated. The t-ship poor-house, on a farm of 140 acres, is near it, where the average number of paupers are annually maintained by their own labour."

We learned that the poorhouse was still there, officials prior to 1830 having provided room for expansion with a farm of considerable size, but, oddly enough, that was not our objective. Harborton itself called us back, as well as the report that there were obvious traces of a railroad which, in the recollections of many, reaching back to only 1876, was never finished, was completed but never used, was operated only to where rival tracks crossed and served as a mere shuttle line. The real story of "the Frog War" was to be told at Hopewell but the unexpected en route was to prove equally as eventful.

It was a hot day in June. The flatlands to the south were humid and concrete ribbons of highway sent up waves of heat that seemed to create mirages of sultry pools across them in the distance. Beyond Trenton, out toward Ewingville where the hills begin, it was cooler, for there was an air going. Fields of ripening grain waved golden on every side and the corn was showing its first tassels. Here and there a phoebe sang cheerily from the thickets and now and then the wary eye caught a red-winged blackbird skimming to a shadier knoll.

As we rode along we read what Mr. Saltar had to say about some of the Herberts, the Harberts and the Harbors, for in just that order he indicated a transition similar to that in the name of the village that honors the family. As far back as 1671, Bridgett Herbert "made an agreement to rent house and land in Middletown, of Edward Smith." Thomas Herbert, yeoman, of Middletown, "had warrant for 131 acres of land in 1676, and 132 acres in 1677." From 1695 to 1698, a Thomas Herbert was collector of Middletown, and from that time on Walter, Henry, James, Daniel, John and Thomas Herbert seem to have been active in public affairs, from the buying of land "at Barnegat on Metetecunk" to taking a part as soldiers

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in the Revolutionary War. There were some others in the army, too, some already lettering their name Harbert, probably because that was how friends said it when they bade good-morning.

South of Allenwood and west of Manasquan there's Herbertsville but Gordon doesn't list it with Herberton. As we followed branches of the family tree more toward the midlands, we found a notation that bore significance when we met at least one of the Lawrences for whom Lawrenceville was named when someone objected to Maidenhead, long after days when the Assunpink was the Sanpinck. When the old name was dislodged for one honoring Captain James Lawrence, after his brilliant action in Massachusetts Bay in 1813, Obadiah, one of the nine children of Obadiah "and w. Hannah Lawrence"—the confusing abbreviation means a widow, no doubt—married, in 1765, Elizabeth, granddaughter of Thomas Warne, "and had three sons, John, William and Obadiah, and two daughters, Sarah and Elizabeth." And should you wonder who Thomas Warne was, you must never do so publicly in the New Jersey midlands, where, as they say in Crosswicks, everybody is related to everybody else, and some take their ancestry decidedly seriously. Thomas Warne bought lands in Monmouth in 1690 and the previous year—one of the twenty-four proprietors, he was a Dublin merchant who with his two sons, Thomas and Stephen "came to the province in 1683." Make a note of it, please.

Out near Ewingville, the real-estate signs talk about "Green Curve." Lest you are tempted to conclude that the name has something to do with the fields, or with such inquirers as we often appeared to be, remember that though Greens may sometimes seem as plentiful as Browns and Smiths, the Greens of East and West New Jersey were already on hand in the late 1600's. It was in 1684 that Sarah Reape sold "all her claim to land of Henry Green." There was a "Widow Green" named in a suit as early as 1705. But it seems the Greens came seeking greener fields toward the Delaware, and that there

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was an abundance of Henrys. So, when George Bennett chanced to remark that it was Henry Green and Henry's uncle, Reeder, who had first aroused his curiosity concerning the hills and valleys about them, we went to see Henry's uncle.

For the Greens to have had any association with Sarah Reape was distinguishing enough and we told Uncle Reeder so. Permission wasn't asked for such reference to him but his handshake proved so hearty and his manner so jovial, that afterward he was best remembered that way. Salter's notes revealed that "William Reape of Newport, Rhode Island, one of the twelve patentees, 1665, seems to have been among the foremost in founding the settlement of Monmouth," the Freehold of today. Moreover, "by reference to the rights claimed from the Proprietors for land by Mrs. Reape, she must have been one of the largest, if not the largest land proprietor in the county. Besides which, "she owned land in Rhode Island," and, "she also owned property in England."

For all that, Reeder Green admitted the implication that he would prefer to be remembered as the man who liked to wander the creeks with a fish pole and the fields with a gun in the neighborhood of old Ewing Township. "Better than raising corn, and that's the truth, I swan," laughed Uncle Reeder, when he was told.

Heavy-set and active in a way that belied his seventies, he smiled at his wife on the portico of the old house on Green Curve, beginning at once to talk of the vanished Federal City, of Lawrence Township, old Cap' Van Kirk's still house, old Hunt's Mill "where they had the sheep," and Greensburg, which became Wilburtha.

"No," he said, "I'm not one of the Greens from Greensburg, although that's a branch of the family, sure enough. It was Alex and Jimmie's father who went over and settled Greensburg." Uncle Reeder's branch of the family centers around the old house where he was born, not more than a mile or so from the venerable stone house in which we found him. "The old homestead was built by William Green," he said, "in 1712. It was the first brick house in the township.

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The brick was burned right there on the farm—it was burned so hard it was a deep blue—but now it's covered over with white, and you wouldn't know that. But I remember."

The memory of Amos Reeder Green, for that was the name he disclosed to us on improving acquaintance, proved exhaustive. He recalled that William Green's tombstone was the oldest found in the old Ewing graveyard and that it was his father who found it "and had it fixed up." He remembered the Ewingville that had been Cross Keys, Howell's mill on the Shabbicunk Creek, the still house that was Cap' Van Kirk's and "Natty Drake's Mill" all in short order. "There were mills everywhere, all going strong," he said, "but the creeks held more water in those days."

"There was another old mill," he said, "behind the old brick house." Then, as if to prove that the dissolution of the mills began long, long ago, he added: "But that was going down when I was a boy. I can remember the uprights being there, and the old up-and-down saw, but they've gone now." Asked how old the house was where we visited him, where he admitted "staying around for seventy-four years," he laughed. Mrs. Green supplemented the conversation by replying: "Older'n it ought to be!"

"It don't lick and it don't go down and that's all we want," declared Uncle Reeder.

He spoke of gunning back of the farm of Giles Hunt up at "the still house farm." "Never saw a stream there, as I can remember," he responded, as the location was more specifically sought, "although there must have been one to cool the apple whiskey." Persistently on the trail of added information and perhaps some persuasive explanation for the name of Honey Hollow, we gained nothing at all. "It's always been Honey Hollow," said Mr. Green. "Charlie Hunt and I used to gun there but we didn't ask questions like that. There were two Honey Hollows, you know. There was another one up behind where the asylum is now."

There was also a second Scrabbletown in the same vicinity, north of Trenton and along the Delaware, but there was no

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accounting for the name or disclosure of who or what did the scrabbling. Uncle Reeder had been so intent on seeking game, that he had missed the ruins of houses in the Hollow altogether. "You talk of crazy names," he spoke up, as if annoyed that he had missed something that would have interested him as much as the stone-mud-and-straw dwellings, perhaps a century old, had interested us, "where was Frog Pond? I know. Why, everybody called it that. It was at the first corner coming east from West Trenton. There was woods and swampy ground there, then, and a kind of a pond. Maybe the woodcock wasn't thick in there!"

Allowing her memory to trace the way up along the river, Mrs. Green recalled Painter's Bridge and Painter's Corner. "Painter had a slaughterhouse there," she said, "not far from the Somerset Road. George Painter was the butcher, with his son, Gus, to help him. There were four or five houses clustered around the corner. One of them, I remember, had a huge old-fashioned oven."

Uncle Reeder said that when he was a youngster, most of the boys called the road along which the Mercer & Somerset had been planned through to Hopewell "the Corkscrew Road. That was sixty-five or seventy years ago." His contention was that the railroad was never used, although we met a man later who said his father was a passenger on the end of the line that was finished for service. "The Reading wouldn't let 'em cross their tracks," he said. "No, they never used the river end of it. We used to hear stories of the conductors and firemen getting off to pick blackberries but that was all." That railroad became more of a mystery than ever.

Old Jake Blackwell lived in a house that was once a hotel at the corner of the Somerset Road, the Greens said. "There was a long porch in front in those days. Princessville?" they repeated thoughtfully, as the name on an old survey map of the area was mentioned. "It never was much but a place to change horses on the old stage lines. I remember thinking," said Mrs. Green, "that a place with a name like that ought to be something to look at. When I saw it to know where it was, it was a disappointment."

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The Greens hadn't seen George Bennett in many years and they laughed when his explanation for rediscovering them brought forth the story of his accuracy in going back to where he recalled millstones and other relics after the passing of decades. He explained, in his own way, the finding of the stones in the deep valley along the Somerset Road. "I saw a fox sittin' there," he said. "He had been winded and I got within a few feet of him before he moved. Then I saw he had been sittin' on those millstones. After I looked them over I went after him again. He climbed up the hill, waitin' each time till I could almost reach out and touch him—I saw that brush and figured it was a mighty nice one to take home, especially if I could catch him with my bare hands. But when we got to the top of the hill, I was winded as much as him and we couldn't do nothin' but sit and look at each other!"

"Ewingville," Uncle Reeder went on, when the laughter subsided, "was Cross Keys years ago. I can remember them sending me 'up to the Keys' to get the mail. There was an old race track there—George, even you should remember it. It was one of the best in the State and a big attraction in those days." The store at Ewingville today was a hotel when gentlemen sportsmen and others were vying with their best mounts on the track, now crisscrossed with streets and concealed by modern homes. "Why, it's come to not being able to go back to places you knew thirty years ago and finding anything or anybody you knew, I swan," objected Uncle Reeder.

The years are not so long ago when New Jersey knew its own witchcraft and much stranger things. Not so deep in Burlington County the story persisted through the past and into the present generation that a woman, on whose unborn child a curse had been placed in vengeance, gave birth to a snake which would disconcert those who called at the house by wriggling about the floor. And perhaps nearer Trenton there were those who placed pins in a pig's ear and then burned the ear with a hot iron despite the porker's squealing protests, all the while wishing ill fortune to a hated neighbor; later, making it their business to call to see the result of their "hex," they often returned home to recount gleefully the

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agonies of someone in the "cursed" household. Yes, digging back into the years is disturbing, as well as delightful business.

Maidenhead, as a township, goes back to 1798, and was settled in the first 1700's. When Hunterdon County was set apart, the colonial assembly directed the court of common pleas to sit at Maidenhead, the village that today is Lawrenceville, alternating with Hopewell. This is by no means Maidenhead's story but merely by way of introduction of the fact that when the first courts of Hunterdon were held the second Tuesday of June, 1714, among the magistrates attending were William and Samuel Green. There are a couple of stories about the vicinity that you can't afford to pass up as long as you're in the neighborhood, however, even if they don't concern the Greens.

At the time of the Battle of Princeton, few persons had lingered in the vicinity of the Green Curve or Maidenhead. Most of the men were with Washington in Pennsylvania and the women had gone elsewhere with the plundering of their homes. Of course, there was no reason why a soldier or two couldn't come home to see what was left and if the family was safe, if they promised to be careful and be back by morning. That is what Elias Phillips did. He and two friends came across the river and when they found everything smashed and everybody gone, they were more than annoyed and decided to do something about it. They hid in an abandoned shop and when three enemy soldiers came along in a wagon, they jumped out and took the trio prisoner. Washington was so pleased with Mr. Phillips and his adventure that he gave him and his friends the wagon and its contents.

Jacob Keen, known to be a strong Whig, also lived down the road. After Washington's retreat, Mrs. Keen locked up all the family silver in a bureau and stood in front of it. Some Hessians invaded the house and demanded everything, even the silver. While Mrs. Keen made believe that she didn't know what was wanted because she couldn't speak Hessian, she sent one of her children for an officer, even one of the enemy if he were a man of rank. Just as the intruders were about to



Modern gadgets like gas tanks and signs proclaiming membership in grocery chains have little in common with all the rest in the old store at Harbourn, once Herberton, one of the oldest country stores in point of service in the State.



Out Ewing way, they call it the Green Curve. Here on the Curve live Reeder Green and his wife. Greens have been there since long before the battles at Trenton. Note the fireplace, peculiar to Midland Jersey.

Unassuming, jolly, his agility in the farm-yard belieing his age, Reeder Green appeared and chatted about his ancestors who lived in the earliest houses above Trenton.





This house of logs near Ewing, once Cross Keys, may have been small but there was a fireplace large enough to conceal British officers. Madison Furman lived there and the Furmans were said to be Tories.



Beside an ancient hearth and among family treasures where his grandfather was the cobbler of Cross Keys, Alfred Lanning remembers the past and enjoys the present to the full.

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break open the bureau with the butts of their muskets, the officer appeared with the youngster and the marauders fled.

Among the first settlers of the land that became Ewing Township, split from Trenton in 1834, were two Reeders, Jacob and Isaac. As for the name of Ewing, well, the years that are many and long have done as many tricks as they have with Harbourton—Ewing was Washington's choice, Irvine Marshall's, Irvin Wilkinson's and Irwin Botta's. Gordon, as you've heard, went the whole hog to make it Irwing. But Ewing it is, and was, from the days of Braddock's defeat. When Benson J. Lossing wrote his monumental *Pictorial Field-Book* it was Dr. Francis Ewing who had in his possession the floral arch that was made for the reception given Washington on his way to the inauguration. It had become Dr. Ewing's rose arbor, remembering perhaps that it once bore other roses from the gardens of the whole Trenton area, with the inscription below it, "The Defender of the Mothers will be the Protector of the Daughters." The arch had been erected on Trenton Bridge and the President-to-Be rode a fine horse beneath it.

But Trenton's not a Forgotten Town. . . . However, in the consideration of those events, the externals stand out unduly. When the Commander handed a note to the Reverend J. F. Armstrong, thanking the women of a section that reached up the Pennington Road, around the Green Curve and on to Maidenhead, he recognized the contrasts that had come to the neighborhood. Women who had fled for their lives, women who had been victims of war-time indignities, the Gold Star mothers of the day and daughters who had seen family homesteads burned to the ground were there. "The astonishing contrast between his former and actual situation on the same spot," said Washington's thank-you note given Pastor Armstrong, "the elegant taste with which it was adorned for the present occasion, and the innocent appearance of the white-robed choir who met him with the congratulatory song, has made such an impression upon his remembrance as, he assures them, will never be effaced."

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What contrasts there were, too! And what contrasts there are today. The note, read to the ladies when they had been called together to hear it at the house of Judge Smith, whose adopted daughter, Miss Lydia Imlay, gave it to Chief Justice Ewing, stressed the changes because here it was that the Hessians fought and died, knowing that even the Electoral Prince who had hired them out didn't care. To every school-boy the name *Hessian* is familiar. But what every schoolboy doesn't know, and should, is that after the Battle of Trenton, the Prince of Hesse Cassel wrote:

"You cannot think how much pleased I was to hear that, of the nineteen hundred and fifty-five Hessians who took part in the battle, no more than three hundred and forty-five remain. There are, accordingly, sixteen hundred and ten dead—no more and no less, and so the Treasury owes me, according to our contract, 634,000 florins. The Court of London says, it is true, that some hundred of them are only wounded, who cannot be paid for like the dead; but I hope that, remindful of my instructions, given to you at Cassel, you have not tried to save, with inhuman help, those poor fellows, who could have bought life only at the sacrifice of a leg or an arm. . . ."

Not that excuse is being offered for the Hessians' behavior in their raids, robberies, and depredations which often ended in murder. The point is they went berserk less from natural inclinations, perhaps, than because of the lure of mob violence inspired by the sudden realization that they were supposed to get killed to help pay the national debt, or something. Many of the Britishers were close on the heels of their mercenary comrades in arms when it came to deeds of war-time cruelty, no matter how charitable one strives to be. Apparently the chief difference between those deeds and the atrocities committed in the World War and, more recently, in the Sino-Japanese conflict, is that modern weapons match fighting on a larger scale.

Mention the name of Peter Stretch and you must recall that even Bordentown was plundered by Hessians, when the storehouse of Joseph Borden was robbed and the Stretch plate

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and glass peddled in the streets by ruffian soldiery. It is nice to remember in this connection that it was Joseph Stretch, who, in 1770, married Sarah Howell, daughter of the wealthy Philadelphia merchant and patriot—and the graves of many Howells are in the lovely enclosure of the Ewing Presbyterian Church, a favorite burial place for notables of all denominations of the vicinity since the early 1700's. Thomas Stretch, father of Peter and Joseph, was first governor of the old Schuylkill Fishing Company, declared to be the oldest social organization in the world.

Part of a Hessian journal found in Trenton is full of complaints against accommodations in the town that consisted "of one hundred houses, of which many are mean and little. . . . We are obliged to be constantly on guard," it continued, "though our people begin to grow ragged, and our baggage is left at New York. . . . My friend Sheffer and myself lodge in a very fine house belonging to a merchant, and we have empty rooms enough. Some of the servants of the inhabitants remain here; last evening I gave one a box on the ear for his sauciness; I bid him bring me a candle, and he replied, if I wanted candles, I should have brought them with me. . . ." This was but little removed from Cross Keys, now Ewingville, for the complaints go on with grumblings against horsemen killed at Maidenhead and a grenadier captain felled by a ball discharged by a rebel concealed under a bridge.

Here where the first Ewing church was erected in 1709, where the present church is one to inspire the poet's ode to Time, here where there are the tombs of Reeders and Greens and Slacks and Deans and Furmans and Howells and Scudders, as well as many, many more of the names which acquit themselves colorfully in old records, it is appropriate to pause and reflect on contrasts, as well as the things time cannot change. Old red shale stones of irregular design push up from the earth in the older section, which compels the road to bend around the enclosure. The Slacks probably go back to the Slaghts and beyond them to Bornte Slaght, of Staten Island, if the family moved Delaware-ward by way of Monmouth. Fur-

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mans were Foremans and Formans—George Foreman, in 1681, bought land in what is now New Brunswick. As for Howells, Scudders and all the rest, step lightly and speak not at all concerning anyone as you step across the sward—for you will be surely heard by somebody's uncle, cousin or niece!

Here are pioneers who were in Ewing when "in the general opinion of the people in the neighborhood of Princeton and Trenton, the enemy the day before the battle of Princeton had determined to give no quarter." Officers wounded and disabled were barbarously mangled and put to death. "A minister of the gospel at Trenton, who neither was, nor had been in arms, was massacred in cold blood, though humbly supplicating mercy," says the report of the committee appointed by Congress to investigate the conduct of the enemy. "The committee," the report goes on, "had authentic information of many instances of the most indecent treatment, and actual ravishment of married and single women, but such is the nature of that most irreparable injury, that the persons suffering it, and their relations, look upon it as a kind of reproach to have the facts related. . . ."

The First Presbyterian Church in Trenton, as well as the Friends Meeting House and St. Michael's Church, were damaged in Tory raids as nearly everyone knows. But it was from "ravages in the back country" where the enemy "fancy themselves out of reach" that the invaders, Hessians and Englishmen alike, preyed particularly "upon the poor miserable inhabitants. . . . Thus whole families, once in affluence," as an item in the *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* of January 27, 1777, points out, "are reduced to wretchedness and beggary without even the usual consolation of the common pity. . . ."

Yes, as even the Commander said, scarcely more than a decade after, there *were* contrasts. And the contrasts are more marked today, so that we may begin to conclude that none of these things happened here. Even as we were recalling something of Uncle Reeder, the name of one of the more illus-

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trious Greens of yore glared at us from a monument of complimentary size. The middle name of the departed was one to arrest the eye if the name of his forgotten town did not: "Philip Physic Green. Died at Greensburg, N. J."

Further on there is a deserted cemetery where once, says the rumor, there was a church, as well. There is no evidence of any building now, although it must have stood at the back. Covered over by wild strawberries, blackberries and lilies of the valley that long ago began their own concealment of pioneers who were figures in the midst of a controversy deserving of more than mere report, the markers of soapstone and red shale are rudely lettered, some with mere initials. One reveals a curly-haired and puffy-cheeked cherub with a particularly dour expression over the grave of Rebecca Creed, "of Jamaica on Long Island" who died Sept. 26, 1757, the daughter of William Creed.

You may hear that the church was Methodist but that was after it had been celebrated as the "New Light Church" erected in 1741, "by persons who seceded from the Presbyterian Church, during the period of the great revival under the labors of the celebrated Whitefield, Tennents and others," according to John Barber and Henry Howe. "The last preacher of this church," says the account, "was Rev. James Davenport, a preacher of some celebrity on Long Island and in Connecticut. Mr. D. died in this place in 1757, aged 40 years; after his death, the congregation generally formed a sort of union with the old church, and their house of worship finally fell into the hands of the Methodists."

Not until after we had been there, viewing Mr. Davenport's stone, did we know of his renown, realizing that for all the complimentary poetry prepared for the flat-top vault, the rhyme beneath the name has proved ineffectual in defying marauders. Bricks are a-tumble among the weeds and wild asparagus where the pastor is recalled:

"Oh, Davenport, a seraph once in clay,
A brighter seraph, now in heavenly day.
How glowed thy heart with sacred love and zeal!

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How like to that thy kindred angels feel!
Clothed in humility thy virtue's throne,
In every eye illustrious but thine own.
How like thy Master on whose friendly breast
Thou oft hast leaned and shall forever rest."

In more recent days of cleavage in the churches, here is an epitaph to reflect upon. Glow of heart and sacred love lie all but hidden from the world. So, too, the sentiment which placed an inscribed stone above the vault of Jane Van Cleve, wife of Abner Hunt. Over crumbling bricks and a discolored slab tossed askew are the words "To the memory of a beloved mother and as a tribute of respect for unceasing parental solicitude and affection, this tablet is inscribed by her son, John Hart." John was unquestionably kin to an earlier John, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a native of Hopewell.

Most of the stones in the enclosure, which might be missed entirely except for the wall of stone and brick on the high bank which serves as invitation to see what is inside, are damaged, bowled over or buried from view almost as effectively as those whose graves they mark. Initials like "J. W." with an underwritten "1805" reveal nothing at all. Names like that of Elizabeth Combs, with the date of 1748, bring speculation but little more although the family name reaches across the State like all the others. Those who use the winding back road are few. Only one recent burial seems to have been made and this close by the wall and gate, as far as possible from where the leaders of their time are unknown and soon will leave no trace.

And so we came to Harbourton—Harbourton gently touched by time. It makes little difference that the spelling has varied, that Herberton is Harbourton now and that even the Herberts of the neighborhood have been succeeded by Harbours. One could almost use Gordon's words to describe it, despite the passage of more than a century since they were written down. There are few more than a half dozen dwellings, unless the scattered farms are to be counted, and the lit-

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the church stands on guard at the bend near the junction of the roads. The store was operating then and it is operating now. Only the tavern has changed and the back of it remains unaltered by years of service as a dwelling.

There are few things that a patron could not ask for and get in the store, at the corner of the road over to Titusville. The shelves and cases are full of everything imaginable on three sides. At the back there is a doorway through which descent is made by several steps to a room now filled with additional stock where a large, old-fashioned oven remembers a time when this was part of the living quarters. Later generations added the frame dwelling attached and attained through another door but that, surely, is almost as old. The establishment has lost none of its solid dignity—in fact, it may owe its preservation—to a determination to move with the years, adding gasoline tanks outside and a refrigerator for soft-drinks within. In the assortment and casual jumble, the visitor sees suddenly that the store is also a post office, with the cubbyhole mailboxes just inside the doorway of the back room.

The first visit revealed the lady next-door doing her evening's shopping by the simple action of coming through the doorway and announcing her needs. Later we inquired concerning her and learned from the storekeeper that she was Mrs. Madeline Johnson who before her marriage was a Miss Lawrence, the village schoolteacher whose class assembled in the white building found further down the road and remodeled to serve as a commodious dwelling. Later still we talked with the lady but she proved shy and noncommittal.

There was so much we wanted to ask her, for they said her father was there before her. But though we spoke of the church and the tavern and the little store, "Yes, so I've heard tell," was all she would say. We wanted to know something more of the Lawrences, the family ties that bound them together, in old Monmouth, in Upper Freehold and across all the neighboring hills—soldiers, leaders in politics and early lawmakers. One of the longest wills of early times was writ-

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ten by William Lawrence 1st in Middletown in the earliest 1700's, a testament by which he bequeathed "to his loving wife, Elizabeth, during her natural life, forty acres of land with the dwelling house, barn, orchard, etc., thereon; also to said wife all household goods and furniture that he had with her when he married her." William the First was thorough, giving to his son, Joseph, "the use of my negro boy, 'Shallo,' for the term of thirteen years, when said negro boy is to be free." To each of three grandsons he gave a horse. To one granddaughter he bequeathed ten shillings and to five others he left a two-year-old heifer. But of these Lawrences and others, Mrs. Johnson . . . oh, well, perhaps it was too near supper-time.

It was Silas Lawrence who had the store—Silas was Mrs. Johnson's father. "His father had it before him," said Charles Stout, the present storekeeper. It was his wife whom we met there, in charge, on our first visit, when the story of Penelope Stout and the mingling of ancestral boasts concerning Sir Francis Drake and notables of the Massachusetts Bay Colony provided a sudden fitting climax to the day's inquisition. "Seems to me," Mr. Stout went on, "that the place was Harbourn once. They probably added the 'ton' when the post office came."

The store was first a hat factory, they told us. Across the road, where the Stout house is, unquestionably one of the half dozen that were mentioned in the *Gazetteer*, was a millinery shop. Perhaps the hat-maker sold his best creations across the way. "At least that's what we always heard tell," added Mr. Stout, after every disclosure. The note of apology is all wrong and we said so. Any story good enough for credence by those who have inherited it was good enough for our purposes, we said.

The inn went out of business all of seventy-five years ago, according to the estimates of those in the store. One patron had come in quest of bottled relief from the heat, another wanted kerosene, and a third asked about a lantern and left with the admonition to "put it on the bill." Mr. Stout said

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that in the front room, "if you looked real hard," there were evidences of the bar.

Hopewell, the storekeeper assured us, warming up, had been named for one of his ancestors. And we couldn't help but think of Adrian Ely Mount, who had cautioned us not to accept the common "Squaw, come," as the explanation of the rise of the name of Squankum. For here was genial Mr. Stout telling us the same kind of a story about Hopewell, about his own forebears, and he obviously believed it. Jonathan Stout, he said, was his great-great-great-grandfather, and he didn't even stutter. "He was pretty friendly with the Indians," said the storekeeper. "At one of the important meetings one of the Indian chiefs came forward and said to Jonathan, 'Hopewell?'—and that's how they got the name!"

At Hopewell the story's a lot more colorful—and reasonable—than that, Mr. Stout.

When Harbournon was Herberton, or, perhaps, as they say, Harbournon and Harborton, they used to get the mail at Mount Rose, according to where you lived along the road. "Yes, I can remember when there was a post office at Mount Rose," said Mr. Stout. By this time the storekeeper had hurried across the road to retrieve from an uncertain hiding-place an old Atlas of Mercer County and vicinity, a book duly inscribed as the property of Andrew Jackson Hunt, whose hand added the date of 1874. This was of special interest because it brought another flash-back of the Somerset Railroad, deserted stone bridge supports which we had seen that day down below where "The New Light" Church had been.

One of the many engravings showed the tracks of the line passing the Phillips home and paved the way for the revelation that, forgotten as are the banks and bridges of the line on the Delaware River side of the Reading, the line operated in and out of Hopewell for a longer interval than any seemed to remember. "Why, the tracks ran along in back of the sheds," said Mr. Stout. "You know that long house near the hotel in Hopewell? That was the station. All that can't be so long ago.

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My father rode on the first train—least, that's what he always told us. George L. Stout, the name was . . . grand old fellow, too."

The modern world intruded unceremoniously as a customer leaned across the counter and tuned in a baseball game on the community radio. The storekeeper frowned, reverently folding up his yellowing book.

The mystery of Harbourn remained as provoking as ever. In 1834, when New Jersey had fourteen counties instead of twenty-one, Herberdon was placed in Hunterdon County, named for an early governor, by Mr. Finley, the map-maker. Now it is Harbourn and the line has stolen up to include it, by a few miles, in Mercer County, named for a Revolutionary general. This much is plain. Hunterdon was set off from Burlington County in 1713 but it was more than a century later, in 1838, that Mercer was sliced from Hunterdon, Burlington and Middlesex. Yet for all our searching, even gentry as reliable as the authors of the *Historical Collections* of 1847 had begun the relegation of Harbourn to limbo. That seems hardly fair.

Peculiarly enough, an early automobiling map of the days of dusters and goggles in Mercer County, gives Harbourn as prominent a place as Titusville, Woodsville, Mount Rose or even Lawrenceville, and even today, official New Jersey maps haven't lost the village in the rush of traffic and events. Some redress for the village seemed more necessary than ever when historians of Ewing and Hopewell Townships, in their concentration on tracing the earliest comers to Long Island in the early 1700's, honoring Ewing with the name of a chief justice and linking Readers, Stouts, Drakes, Tituses and Harts among the first to tread the Ewing-Hopewell hills, ignored Harbourn as if its hat factory were of no importance, as if its Old School Baptist Church weren't there. Pennington, Woodsville, Columbia, Hopewell, Titusville and Bernardsville had their place and Washington's Crossing is revealed as Bernardsville before the Revolution, and Eight Mile Ferry before that—but, obviously, something was wrong.

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"Go down to Titusville and then to the first road above," the storekeeper had suggested. "There's a yellow house in at the corner—that's 'Ol' Harbourn's. He used to be an auctioneer around here. He's one of the Harbourns and he ought to know a thing or two."

We went to Titusville one evening, when the Delaware was brimming over its banks after three days of heavy rain. Murky waters were rushing down, flashing in the last sunlight of the day. We merely asked directions and suddenly we were carried all the way back to Honey Hollow. For someone had said we would find an old man named John Mose, "next to the undertaker's" in Titusville, who had been there since they began marking water levels of recurring floods with notches on trees, barns and bridges. All one has to do is pause and look at a pole or the pillar of a porch and someone will appear from one of the houses along the river and say: "Yup, right up there under the bracket, see the nick in the wood? That was the flood of 1903."

Finding Mr. Mose as a neighbor of the undertaker offered momentary delay, for the funeral parlor was no longer there and the undertaker was dead. But Mr. Mose was still there in his quaint little house, a gnarled old man, bulgy at the midriff, with legs bent by years of activity. He spoke with a German accent. He had lived in Honey Hollow for years, he said, "a long, long time ago past remembering."

When we asked him to describe the farm that had been his, we recognized the stone spring-house we had found in crumbled ruin. "Yes, yes, that's it," he told us merrily, as if delighted to see it again through our eyes. "We used to call it Noah's Backbone." The ark should have fitted in there somewhere but Mr. Mose shook his head.

"Go down to the store—the store hanging over the river," he suggested. "Ask for Annie Phillips. She was born in Honey Hollow." He didn't say "Annie"—it was more like "Enny" and the rest had to be repeated.

The store was closed but we found Mrs. Phillips on the porch of the house she served as housekeeper, across the

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shaded road that once was the main route up the river before the newer highway was constructed on the other side of the canal. Sidetracking Harbourn ton momentarily, we pressed for additional facts on the vale of mystery.

Yes, Mrs. Phillips was born in Honey Hollow. "The old farm," she said, "was back from the Hollow, on the top of the Mountain. There was a gate below it, hung from a hinge in a large hickory tree. There was a spring in the meadow some distance from the houses, surrounded, except for the path, by myrtle stretching as far as you could see."

Mrs. Phillips sighed a little and smiled, enjoying the recollections that had been encouraged there, as the day cooled and the river glided swiftly by. "It's all grown over now, I expect," she hurried on, "but I can see it, with patches of cultivated fields all through the Hollow. There were many farms then, between Honey Hollow and the river but you'd never dream it now, would you? I can remember nine or ten families when people lived on the mountain. Now they're all gone."

We spoke of the ruins we had found and Mrs. Phillips confirmed the fact that the houses in the Hollow were very old, that her father said they had been there long before the Revolution. Less than a century ago the fields were tilled and the farmers, happy in the little that was theirs, built the lanes along the hillsides and through the woods so that neighborly calls could be made on foot and in sturdy carts and carriages.

"Father moved in about 1841, I think," said Mrs. Phillips. "It has been known as the Peter Lawrie place ever since."

Once again an old name made us jump. The Lawries, some of whom became Lauries, go back to Thomas Lawrie, brother of Deputy-Governor Gawen Lawrie, who arrived in the new land as long ago as 1683, bringing along his two children, James and Anne. James built a cabin on land he bought near Allentown. James had two sons, Thomas and William, both of whom became owners of considerable land in Upper Freehold Township, Monmouth County, Thomas becoming a village storekeeper in Allentown.

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Although there is no church now at the corners beyond the dip of Honey Hollow, and although the stones in the yard that haven't been removed are covered over, Mrs. Phillips recalled the building well. "Why, I went to Sunday school there," she said. "It was a stone church with two front doors, one for the men and one for the women, for although it was Methodist, the men sat on one side and the women on the other in some of the churches up here in those days."

Later on, as the world grew down, members of the congregation found the corners too far away and moved down to Titusville. The church was abandoned and taken down later on, stone by stone.

Peter Lawrie went to the Old School Baptist Church at Harbourton when he was a boy. "There was a nice gallery," said Mrs. Phillips, "snug and warm. He said he liked going up there to sleep during the sermons. Old School Baptist preachers used to keep up their exhortations for two hours in those days."

Asked if she had ever heard of "the Jackson Whites" Mrs. Phillips' answer was a disappointment. Nor did she have any accounting for the origin of the folk around whom the legend has been spun. She remembered Andy Williams and said he "was quite a man in his time." Another notable colored man who lived in the Hollow, she disclosed, was Ephraim Cannon, whose father was a negro preacher in the Pennington area. Many of the first families of Pennington and Hopewell had slaves, she said, but whether the folk who took over the old houses in the Hollow for a time were kin to them was uncertain.

That Honey Hollow served as a refuge from marauding bands of Hessians and Pine Robbers seemed as good a theory as any, we said.

It was time to look up "Ol" Harbourt, to turn to another mystery, the transition of Herberts to Harbours and Herbert to Harbourton. The house is an old one, just beyond Fidler's Creek, not far at all from where a mill once stood. This, we learned from Peter Lawrie's daughter, shattering once and

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for all the romantic notion that the stream was named for an earlier variety of Charlie Lennox, was Johnnie Fidler's sawmill, now recalled in one length of broken wall. When the mill was operating, Linvale was still New Market and Stoutsburg was Stoutsville. Surely an advance from "burg" to "ville" must denote progress.

"Ol" Harbourt was an auctioneer, sure enough, even as was his father, Enoch, before him. Somewhat portly, and a little out of sorts at first because after years of acquaintance with life out-of-doors, he had picked up "some kind of a poison" on his neck and face, he said he knew little of family history or Harbourton, either, for that matter. "If I had perked up when I was younger I might have known something of all that," he said. "But I didn't. Some Harbours is down South and some's out West, they tell me," George Oliver went on, piling his words in little bunches. "And some's dead."

There had been a change, several changes, in the spelling of the name, that was true. "Maybe you're right about the Herbert part of it," agreed the man who said auctioning went out "when the farmer interest went out." "Seems I recall them saying my grandfather spelled it different. That would be Noah Harbourt, buried up there in the Presbyterian yard in Titusville. But I never paid much attention. My aunts could have helped you out. And then there was a woman once who came all the way from out Ohio somewhere looking up Harbours and Herberts. But there's damned little I know."

"There's a difference between what you know and what you don't know," "Ol" Harbourt declared, in improving fettle. "I always like to tell a little farmer story about it. A farmer came into a store one day, maybe that store up at Harbourton. 'What do you know?' the storekeeper asked him. 'I know you got a mess of fine hogs out yonder,' responded the farmer. 'What I don't know is what the blazes you feed 'em on!' That's the difference between what you know and what you don't know. All of it's like a dream to me, coming to me little by little, now that you ask about it."

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Strange, we said, that there were no Harbours or Herberts buried at Harbourton, where the name of the village recalled them after hundreds of years and where a Stout lingers over the quiet roadway not far from the church his kinsman gave provided he alone could choose the site. "I think there's Harbours there," said George Oliver. "Walter ought to be there, I think. He had a farm on the ridge they call the Peter Lawrie place in Honey Holler."

"Mrs. Phillips told us she was born there," we informed him.

"Oh, yes, that's Ed Phillips' widow. Well, I was talking about Walter. He was a clean-cut, rawboned upstanding feller, they say. To see him at his best when he had a mind to dress up, you'd never think he was in them rocks." Mr. Harbours opened the door to dislodge a piece of tobacco. A young deer hurried across the Fidler's Creek Road. "As near as I know from all I've heard, there was three Harbours brothers who came from Wales. One was a schoolteacher and the other two was stonemasons. They all lived up at Harbourton. And some of us just stuck around in this part of the country ever since."

The former auctioneer ran down a long list of those he said knew a lot about the Harbours and the villages and mountain roads the first Harbours knew. "But they're dead now," he would add to every promising disclosure. "My two older brothers knew more than I do, but they're gone. I got another brother up the road but I'm not sure he knows more than me or not. Most of us ain't around any more."

One evening, after that, we made sure of two spellings of the family name in the cemetery "Ol" Harbours told us about, one directly behind the other.

Chapter 7

TOO MANY CROSS KEYS: EWINGVILLE

"When, round the bowl, of vanished years
We talk with joyous seeming—
With smiles that might as well be tears,
So faint, so sad their beaming;
While memory brings us back again
Each early tie that twined us,
O, sweet's the cup that circles then
To those we've left behind us!"

—THOMAS MOORE: 1779-1852

MAYBE THERE *were* too many Cross Keys. Maybe, when post offices came, folk in one got the letters intended for those in another, perhaps the one near Williamstown, once Squankum. Just the same, the name of Cross Keys meant something, with key roads leading somewhere important and then, when a change was demanded by something called efficiency, the substitute was often the product of a sudden decision, as often meaningless.

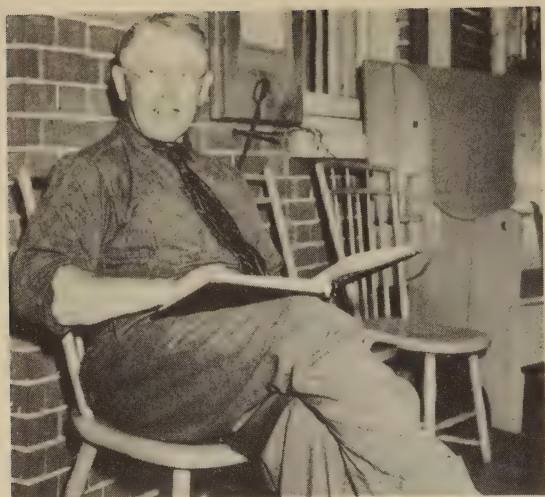
If any Cross Keys has a right to remain Cross Keys it is the one described as far back as Thomas Gordon who calls it a "hamlet of Trenton t-ship, Hunterdon co., on the road from Trenton to Pennington" containing "4 or 5 dwellings." Gordon wrote of days when there was no Mercer County, when Hunterdon dipped down to the bend in the Delaware and included a whole host of important places, many of which, like Cross Keys, have been lost behind newer names. There were Alexandria, Baptist-town, Centreville, Clarksville, Clinton, Flemington, Hepborn's, Hopewell Meeting, Fairview, Lambertsville, Lawrenceville, Lebanon, Mattison's Corner, Milford, Mount Pleasant, New Germantown, New Hampton, Pennington, Pennyville, Pittstown, Potterstown, Prallsville, Quakertown, Ringoes, Sergeantsville, Trenton, Vansyckle's, White House and Woodsville, all of which were post towns. There's a list to challenge anybody!



Once it was a meeting house at Ellisdale, now Shelltown. Later it was a school. Now it serves as a tenant house, in what is surely its third location in the neighborhood.



Propped up because the days of horseshoeing are fled from even Ellisdale, once Shelltown, the smithy wasn't taken down, they said, because it was expected to fall down more quickly in spite of any aid. Perhaps it has tumbled by now.



Squire Tilton likes to read the family's history on the portico of the old Tilton farm on Sunday afternoons. Family heirlooms are on every hand.

A broken tanner's stone serves as steps for a side door on the Tilton farm, recalling days when the tanyard there was a thriving business.



Lone relic of the tannery days at Ellisdale. It leans in several directions in the yard of the Tilton farm but it is still in service.

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Hunterdon County was taken from Burlington by act of the Assembly March 13, 1714, and got its name, as has been said, from Governor Hunter. It was a big county originally. Later, as Gordon says, "it has been since modified by the erection of Somerset, Morris and Warren cos." Mercer County didn't come along until February, 1838. Cross Keys, settled somewhere about 1700, is now Ewingville, not to be confused with Ewing, but similarly named for Ewing Township, cut from Trenton Township in 1834, named in its turn for Charles Ewing, LL.D., Chief Justice of New Jersey, who died in 1832.

Alexandria may have had early churches, a mill and a tavern; Centreville may have been lost in Windsor; Hopewell may boast its pioneer Stouts, and Clarksville may have owned two taverns for its six or eight dwellings, but even Sergeantsville with its Mantua Manual Labor Institute, and White House, with three stores, three taverns and two churches in the eighteenth century, had to be passed up, temporarily, for Cross Keys. For here we were to meet Uncle Alfred Lanning, his sister, Mrs. Jennie Cadwallader, and, down the road, Mrs. Eugene P. Drake. You must know, certainly, that John Lanning was one of the first settlers of the area that became Ewing Township, that the Drakes were with the Stouts, Goldens, Houghtons, Hunts, Tituses and Mershons in Hopewell—we had met another Mrs. Drake in Harbourton, you remember—and the Cadwalladers are as well known to the vicinity of Trenton as are the Stouts in what was once old Hunterdon, where all of them were bound together.

Those who came from Long Island, East Jersey and elsewhere to build homes in the area were bold enough. Phineas Pemberton, associated with Governor William Penn in the 1680's and after, wrote in 1687 of "a great land flood" and a subsequent "rupture" which, early historians say, was "supposed to refer to the formation of the island at Morrisville, opposite the Trenton bridge, which was at this time separated from the main land." Many of those who had set up their homes at the Falls "were visited by sickness and removed by

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death, by a malignant fever, which prevailed among them in 1687, both in Pennsylvania and New Jersey."

But by 1700 no one wanted to remember that. Settlements "were commenced by persons who purchased lands from the original proprietors . . . and most of the deeds for plantations . . . bear date from 1699 to 1710." Among the arrivals in those days were Daniel Howell, John Davis, William Reed, Robert and John Lanning, John Burroughs, Charles Clark, Ebenezer Prout, Richard Scudder, Isaac Reeder, Jonathan Davis and John Deane. So, remembering our talk with Reeder Green, of the Green Curve, a close friend of the Lannings and Drakes, we went to see Uncle Alfred Lanning, younger brother of the late well-remembered judge.

They called him Uncle Alfred and we joined them, feeling that he wouldn't mind. Very deaf but very happy in his memories, he proved one of those old gentlemen all men would like to resemble, physically and temperamentally, when they attain his years. Cross Keys might have lapsed from memory but the old Lanning house that was a part of it was still intact. One visit, crossing the doorsill into an atmosphere that linked past and present as pointedly as the old hearth and the drums of a new generation beside it, called for another. Memories, shared in a house of long ago among the treasures familiar to the ancestors of pleasant people whose geniality belies their age, make even a newcomer feel that he has been there many times before.

The house itself was built by Nathaniel Coleman, Uncle Alfred's grandfather, who was a cobbler there. "It took Grandfather a whole day to make a pair of shoes in those days," Mr. Lanning said. "Very often, there was no exchange of money at all. Those who wanted shoes paid Granddad in farm produce." When Nathaniel Coleman died in 1879 he had lived eighty years in that very house.

Uncle Alfred began remembering days in the little red schoolhouse down the road, enumerating the jurists, sheriffs and other famous folk who had learned their three R's there. "It was a country school," he said, "but there were some

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good teachers." Out of the past with amazing dexterity he plucked the names of a Mr. MacDonald, Sherman Potts, Abel Hartwell and Lydia Howell. "They taught us a lot," said Uncle Alfred, "and when we wouldn't learn, they'd tan us."

Those were days when no one expected school trustees to concern themselves with transportation for pupils. If your father or mother had time and the inclination, one or the other might bring you down to the school in a buggy but the probability was, as Uncle Alfred pointed out, your parents would have been much too busy, with something to do every minute of the day. "One family sent the children, walking, from two miles away," he said. "They were the Tindalls, I think. There was another teacher at the school—what was his name? Giddings, that was it!—he married one of the girls in the class. The daughters came back to live in Trenton."

There were 1500 persons living in Ewing Township in 1905. "I ought to know," said Uncle Alfred, with a laugh. "I took the census."

Once Ewing Township was looked upon as an agricultural heaven. "Why, at one time it ranked second in the whole United States," declared our host. "Those were the days of Princessville, on the old Princeton pike halfway between Lawrenceville and Princeton, Lewisville up the Lawrenceville Road,—and Federal City! Have you found that yet?"

We confessed reluctantly that we had done considerable hunting, had traveled up and down the Federal Road, but all we could find at the point suggested was a couple of houses.

"Guess that's about all there is," said Uncle Alfred. And yet, at Ewingville today they speak of the Federal City Road as familiarly as they do the Lower Ferry Road and the Upper Ferry Road, all of them highways of the stagecoach days. In those times when Cross Keys was a tavern stop at the Ewingville corners and Mercerville was Sandtown, a commission appointed by George Washington to pick a site for the nation's capital finally got around to selecting what today

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exists as a mere name. The story goes that the commission was so slow, despite the urge to locate near Princeton where so much of importance had occurred in the days of uncertainty, that members were scolded and told that half a dozen likely points could have been suggested in half the time.

Neither Mr. Lanning nor his sister knew very much about that. They were content to conclude that no one took the proposal of a seat of government at Federal City very seriously because "there was never very much there." They knew, however, the days of the driving park where the country's finest horses competed when Mrs. Cadwallader was a little girl. "My mother lived here," she said, "when Voorhees Breese, the Quintons and the Skillmans were interested in the racing. Henry Howell had the tavern at the corner then. The hotel was the post office, too. Children were sent to the barroom to get the mail."

"The oldest thing I can call to mind," Uncle Alfred went on, smilingly, "was the tornado of 1862. I was only four years old then but I've never forgotten it. What we called a whirligig tossed some trees one way and some the other. I saw the top twisted right out of an apple tree."

Speaking of trees along the Pennington Road, Mr. Lanning remembered one ancient buttonwood in particular, supposed to have been historic. "The heart was out of it when I was a boy," he said. "My father said he cut the top off in 1840. We boys used to get clear inside it—I can remember cutting a hole through so I could get inside and shoot crows.

"There were piles of cordwood at all the stations then for the wood-burning locomotives. My brother worked on the construction of the branch off to Belvidere with a team." Uncle Alfred said he remembered the famous Frog War of the Somerset Railroad well. "They wanted to catch the Centennial trade with the new line," he supplemented out other accounts. "We used to walk in to Trenton in those days and think nothing of it. Guess I was sixteen or seventeen then. There was no such thing as steam or gasoline power. Anything worth while to be accomplished was by main strength and awkwardness."

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On another visit, Mrs. Cadwallader told us of Susari Titus, who lived in an old house with her daughter near where the State Normal School may be found today, around the corner, almost, from the Lanning home. "She was there long after the area began to develop as a residential section," she said. "Her trusted friend was C. V. Hill, the refrigerator man, who saw to it that no matter what was done with the tract he was opening up there, her home was to stand and she was not to be bothered as long as she wanted to live there."

Mrs. Titus persisted with primeval methods long after modernity had appeared over the hills, according to Mrs. Cadwallader, who, with her brother, had just come home from church. "I can remember her and her daughter smoking herring for the Winter out in front of the old house, just as they had always done, the two of them as black as the fish they were smoking."

It was Mrs. Drake who talked to us in the front room of the old Drake farm, up the road from the school of red brick that took the place of the one Mr. Lanning told us about and which, in its turn, had become a dwelling when we were there. Mrs. Drake, who revealed that she had been jotting down odds and ends of local history most of her life, said she remembered a schoolhouse where Federal City was supposed to be and when there were several houses at what remains of Lewisville.

"Then there was Greensburg Station that's now Wilburtha," she said. "And did you ever hear of Brumagen?" We confessed that we hadn't. "Well, perhaps it was Birmingham that's now part of Trenton, I don't know, but I can hear my mother saying Brumagen just as plain. And by the way, Marshall's Corner may not look so important now but do you know who it was named for? No less than James W. Marshall, who discovered gold in California!"

We remembered seeing the name in connection with the discovery in the chronology of Hopewell with the date January 24, 1848. "Obviously," we said, as we had said it concerning almost every section of the midlands, "anything of any importance at all had its beginning somewhere near here."

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What do you know about Mount Rose, as long as we're up Marshall's Corner way? We were inquiring there but apparently we couldn't find the right ones to talk to."

Mrs. Drake startled us and then smiled. "Good place to stay away from," she said bluntly.

"Is that so?"

"My mother used to say that," the lady went on, still smiling at our discomfiture. "Many of our people were from up that way. They used to try for copper on the mountain—they were looking for it once at my grandfather's home. That was Nathaniel Titus. But they didn't get much. During the Revolution the folks up that way were Tories and when the Civil War was on there were supposed to be Southerners there. Take it for what it's worth—Mother used to say to stay away."

We confessed we had seen nothing alarming at Mount Rose but we had wished, on many occasions, to find someone who remembered a little more of the village it so obviously was. Perhaps some day we will.

There may have been 1500 in Ewing Township when Uncle Alfred took the census but in 1857, according to Mrs. Drake, there were only 1017, with three schools and seventy-seven "scholars." "The oldest place we ever found is an old burying ground near the asylum on the easterly side of the highway between the house of John Hutchinson and Andrew Heath," she said. "This was given by Mr. Hutchinson in 1703 to Andrew Heath, Richard Ayre, Abiel Davis and Zebulon—Zebulon lived on the old Alfred Reeder place—for the erection of a public meetings house and also a place of burial. This was probably the oldest meeting house in the State aside from those built by the Quakers. The widow of Colonel William Trent, for whom Trenton was named, was buried there."

Here, too, Mrs. Drake told us, were buried Samuel Tucker, sheriff of Hunterdon County, and his wife. Two large stones on brick foundations mark their graves in a plot that is now durably fenced in. The lines revealing that Sheriff Tucker

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died January 14, 1789, at the age of sixty-seven, are followed by these:

"Tho in the dust I lay my head,
Yet gracious God, thou wilt not leave
My soul forever with the dead,
Nor lose thy children in the grave."

Compared to other epitaphs, this is singularly dignified and impressive. That on the grave of Elizabeth, Mrs. Tucker, who died in 1787 at fifty-seven, is a little longer:

"This life is a dream an empty show
But the bright World to which I go
Hath joys substantial and sincere
When shall I wake and find me there
Then burst the chains with sweet surprise
And in my Savior's image rise."

Sheriff Tucker was president of the Provincial Congress that sat at Trenton in October, 1775, working on the Constitution which he signed July 2, 1776. Mrs. Tucker was Elizabeth Gould, the daughter of James and Ann Gould who lived near the oft-forgotten plot and gave their name to the little brook that finds its way to the foot of the hill, Gould's Run. Espousing the Republican cause in early days, the Sheriff later accepted British protection.

The deed for the burying ground at what became Ewing Church was given in 1709, Mrs. Drake said, with the congregation organizing in March of that year. The founders were listed as Richard Scudder, John Burroughs, Jacob Reeder, Cornelius Anderson, Ebenezer Prout, Daniel Howell, John Deane, John Davis, Enoch Anderson, William Anderson, Simon Sacket, Joseph Sacket, John Farley, Caleb Farley and William Reed. These pioneers met for worship in an old log meeting house built in 1712, with a more substantial building taking its place in 1726.

"I might say right here," Mrs. Drake went on, "that Mrs. Jemima Howell, the youngest daughter of John Burroughs, who was born in 1725, declared in a letter dated August,

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1814, that she remembered helping scrub the frame church seventy years before. She remembered when there were but two or three small houses where Trenton stands now, with dense woods extending from the neighborhood of the frame church to Stacy's Mills. Stacy's Mills were on what is now Broad Street, Trenton, along the Assunpink Creek. For years and years there was only a footpath down to the mills, with farmers carrying grain to market on packhorses."

The brick church was built in 1795 and remodeled in 1839. The present church was erected in 1867.

Then Mrs. Drake brought the Greens into the picture and although we had heard much about them from Reeder, here in the old farmhouse we were able to add more. "William Green purchased three hundred and forty-five acres from Colonel Daniel Coxe," said our hostess, glancing at her own notes. "The deed for that transaction bears the date of 1712. As you probably heard, Mr. Green built the first brick house in the township, the date in the east end going up as 1717. This farm was in the Green family for five generations. The last owner was Henry Green, father of Reeder. William Green was one of the first judges of old Hunterdon County.

"There's a little story that's told about Mrs. Green. She was at home with only one servant during the Revolution when some Hessians came galloping up and demanded their dinner. She was frightened, naturally. However, she provided a meal for them. Maybe she wasn't surprised when they paid her—and in gold!"

It won't be long before the Burroughs farm will have been in the family two hundred and fifty years. The bricks, doors and windows in the old part of the house came from England and were put there before the Revolutionary War. This farm had a land grant from King George II to Thomas Revell and was transferred to Ralph Hunt in 1699, with thirty thousand acres extending from Maidenhead, now Lawrenceville, to the Delaware.

"Ralph Hunt sold a large portion comprising acreage in Titusville to Joseph Burroughs in 1708," Mrs. Drake told us.

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"Joseph Burroughs sold to John Burroughs in 1711. It came to James Burroughs in 1758, then to John Hendrickson, and after that to Richard Burt, his son-in-law, and from him to Elijah and John Hendrickson. I could give you a lot more names—the main thing is that it is once more a Burroughs farm.

"Mr. and Mrs. Edward McIlvain Burroughs were both buried the same day from the same parlor in which they were married fifty-two years before. There used to be two cannon balls up at the house—they were dug up on the farm with all sorts of Indian relics. Ralph Hunt's papers were chock-full of the names of his slaves.

"Thomas Scudder—they called him Old Good Man Scudder—came to this country in 1635. He was the ancestor of Richard Scudder who died in 1754, a lieutenant in command of a troop of New Jersey Militia. Richard was the first owner of the farm—his son, John, took it over and, in turn, John's son, Amos, worked it. After that another John Scudder, son of Amos, took charge and still later, John's son, William, and then, William's son, John Holmes Scudder. Let's see if I have those dates straight. Yes, that's right. Amos and his son, John, were Continentals—Amos helped Washington cross the Delaware. That's another farm that's been in the family for over two hundred years."

Mrs. Drake then remembered Mary Kean, who, she said, was born February 3, 1766. Dates and personalities seemed to roll from the papers our hostess of the afternoon produced. "Mary and John Scudder were married," she said, "November 21, 1791. It's probable that John had known some of the Keans in the war and they may have fought, side by side. Mary was one of the thirteen young ladies who sang the ode of welcome and strewed flowers for Washington as he passed over the Assunpink bridge at Trenton on his way to the inauguration in New York."

The number of the young women who performed the pretty gesture seemed to have increased from that given us in Nottingham but we said nothing about that. If thirteen

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was accurate it is obvious that no one was superstitious on that important occasion. Already Mrs. Drake was recalling the mill at Somerset Junction along the Delaware.

"Mr. Jedediah Scudder lived there," she said. "Some of Washington's disabled soldiers stopped there. Mrs. Scudder had just finished baking. The soldiers were so hungry they ate up everything she had in the house. But nothing like that bothered real patriots. She built fires on the hearths in both the parlor and sitting room and made up beds for the hungry men. With the rooms filled with soldiers, clad in rags and with hardly a pair of shoes among them, Mrs. Scudder turned to greasing their feet. Their feet were so badly cut that when the men left, they made tracks of blood." Mrs. Drake said the story was told by Mrs. Sarah Clark in 1919 when she was ninety-three.

We had seen an old house at the corner, half concealed by a high hedge. Mrs. Drake said it was very old. "It's supposed to be the old Reed house of pioneer times," she told us. "The walls are four feet thick." This was another house where Washington was said to have sampled a nice feather-bed and—who were we to deny it? "The house is part of the Andrews farm—Mrs. Andrews used to have two Hessian hats and part of an old Revolutionary bridle. The farm was in the Reed family for over two centuries."

Even the Wenzel house near by has its own story, Mrs. Drake recalled. Built before the Revolution, the house once sheltered a deserter from Washington's army, a soldier who hid in the big fireplace one night.

Charles Clark came from Long Island with other pioneers and lived, until his death on the night of the battle at Trenton, in a house near the church, later known as the Conway place. "This was formerly the farm of Edward McIlhvain," Mrs. Drake averred. "Charles was in a room where the floor was covered with worn and weary soldiers, all asleep. He tiptoed among them, so he wouldn't disturb them as he tried to find a place to sleep. He was in the act of putting his watch on the mantel, the story goes, when he fell into the open fire and

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there burned to death. Some say his plight was first discovered by a negro servant—but if that's true, the soldiers must have been more than tired or, perhaps, it was an adjoining room."

Mr. Clark was a trustee of the First Presbyterian Church from 1757 to 1775 and never once had he missed a meeting of the board in all those years!

There are many stories that strangely coincide from a number of areas. Mrs. Drake told us one. It seems there was an old woman, whose name unfortunately has been forgotten, who lived in the vicinity of Somerset. In some way she found out about the British plans for attacking Trenton and, putting a bag of corn on her horse, went down to the mill where she found someone ready and willing to take word to Washington. Up in Somerset County it was Mrs. Alchie Schenck Harris who, warned by a servant that the British were coming, climbed a tree and from that vantage point, heard British plans which she explained in detail to Washington's staff, after riding through the lines in a harmless-looking mill wagon.

Again, in a number of instances, from one end of the State to the other, prized clocks were hidden, usually in the woods, so they wouldn't be damaged or stolen by enemy soldiers. Patrick Ryan's place, Mrs. Drake said, was once the Temple farm and the Temples had one of those clocks. When Hessians were in meadows and woods on every hand, the timepiece was concealed in a strip of woodland and brought back to the house three months later. Long years after, the clock, and a chair in which a British officer died in the old house, were disposed of at a public sale.

Mrs. Drake told one more story and when we heard it we wondered if there weren't as many more, indelibly linking the Cross Keys neighborhood with the colorful past. "The Hessians were wandering around just north of Pennington on a farm belonging to the Baldwins," she said, "looking for cows to steal. A lone old woman was in charge, all the menfolk having gone off to the war. She had one cow, probably left from earlier raids on the farmyard."

The soldiers untethered the cow and drove her out the

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gate. The old woman begged for her cow, saying she was all she had left and that she had need of her. The Hessians proved rather sporting that morning. "You can have her," they shouted, "if you can get her back!"

"Co Cushy, Co Cushy, Co Cushy!" shrilled the old woman, as best she knew how.

"Her cow came back," said Mrs. Drake, simply.

Chapter 8

SHELLTOWN: ELLISDALE

"What shall I do to be forever known,
And make the age to come my own?
I shall like beasts and common people die
Unless you write my elegy . . .
Come, my best Friend! my books! and lead me on,
'Tis time that I were gone."

—ABRAHAM COWLEY: 1618-1667

THERE IS an area in the New Jersey midlands where it is difficult to be certain, without losing an eye or two over the map, just when and where the traveler crosses from one county to another. Hamilton Township, in Mercer County, reaches down to a sharp point at Extonville, not far from Ellisdale and not too far from Crosswicks. Yet from this bewildering corner forgotten history traces old roads in almost every direction.

An unwavering line moves down from where the Crosswicks Creek crosses, dividing Burlington County from Monmouth and Ocean. Extending upward, it separates six of Mercer's townships, Hamilton from Washington and Windsor, Lawrence from Windsor and Princeton and finally, Princeton from Hopewell. But a straight line upon a chart vanishes when the traveler is making the most of all he sees.

If he is thinking of the old covered bridge, posted with advertisements of patent medicines and circuses long departed, he will forget that Burlington County has been left across the creek and that on the other side the settlement was more particularly North Crosswicks, seemingly Woodwardsville of an earlier time, in Mercer. A turn to the right, or to the southeast, and the subsequent twists and turns that lead toward Arneytown, through Ellisdale and beyond to Walnford, are sufficient to lose the wariest until, without any warning at all, he's in Upper Freehold Township and Monmouth County.

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There's no use consulting Mr. Gordon on Ellisdale—he doesn't mention it at all. Nor do succeeding historians pay the tribute its red brick houses would seem to command. Perhaps that's because the name is comparatively recent, for as late as 1834—and that's a mere century ago!—Ellisdale was Shelltown. Because of the family still in the neighborhood it would be interesting to guess that *this* might have been Woodwardville but a guess would cause trouble. Perhaps confused by the lines even in his day, the chronicler is careful to say that Shelltown is “on the line between Hanover t-ship, Burlington co., and Upper Freehold t-ship, Monmouth co., on a small branch of the Crosswicks creek” adding that the village “contains some half dozen dwellings” and that “there is a Friends' meeting house near it in Monmouth County.”

We had done some prowling around in the neighborhood of Shelltown long before. Then we were told that Shelltown had become Ellisdale and that no one knew the background of the older name. The explanation was forthcoming the day Uncle Edwin Newbold denied that Arneytown was named for Arney Lippincott, declaring instead that John Arney was its namesake. That was the day Miss Charlotte arranged a picnic without knowing exactly what she was accomplishing.

Certainly she had no idea that the location chosen for the disappearance of sandwiches would in itself supply a clue leading to the recollection of other festive occasions in the locality and to an introduction that was to uncover all sorts of fascinating odds and ends. All we meant to do was ask Squire Tilton for permission to appropriate his grove. Then we saw his house.

In order that too many loose ends won't be left dangling, let's talk about Shelltown—or Ellisdale—first of all. It was the squire who told us that the crossroads village where the half-dozen houses of Gordon's day have increased to perhaps a dozen annexed the name that was discarded in an unusual way.

Apparently the village had existed for some little while

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without a name. Then, one fine day, an itinerant peddler came to town. "What do you call this town?" he asked of someone, making conversation as he untied his pack. "Oh, don't know," was the response, "guess we don't call it much of anything." "I got a name for it," declared the peddler. "Whenever I see that chimney down there, with the shells in it, as I come up the hill, I say, 'Well, here's Shelltown!'"

That is how the squire, Frank B. Tilton, told the tale. Who owned the house with the decorated chimney, he never heard, he said. Some say it was an eccentric sort of chap, but that assertion may malign him greatly. Just because the fellow went to the trouble to get shells—and he must have brought them from a distance in those days—and took pains to have them pressed into the plaster of the chimney, there's no call for making a fool of him. It's obvious that the name struck the fancy of the villager who heard it first, for it was approved and carried long enough for the *Gazetteer* to record it.

Later generations came who thought, probably, that Shelltown didn't sound very impressive. Perhaps the house with the decorated chimney burned down—certainly there's no trace of it today. Just when the present name of Ellisdale was adopted isn't certain but as long as a change was being made, the choice was a good one. It was time to remember the Ellises, celebrated in the locality since the days of Roger Ellis, of Yarmouth, Massachusetts, a settler of the Plymouth Colony, and Rowland Ellis who, some seventy-five years later, came to Burlington as a teacher sent from England by the—be careful, for the reciting of it sounds suspiciously like an anthem!—the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

Squire Tilton's house, sufficiently remarkable in its architectural appointments to gain attention from authorities in the nation's capital, stands majestically on a long gradual rise of pasture land. To the left of it the lane, deeply cut by every kind of vehicle that has been used through the better part of two centuries, approaches the barnyard. There are tall oaks at the foot of the hill but beyond the grove where the Squire's

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sister planted them over seventy years ago, the view toward and from the manorial brick dwelling is unobstructed.

The trees were planted around a schoolhouse that stood there where we took our ease that hot afternoon. There was a breeze going there but elsewhere the waves of heat diffused the picture, cattle seeking what shelter there was along the snake-fence, another old farmhouse across the way and the brook between. There was a clearing in the midst, with a slight elevation, showing where the school had been. What we were not prepared for was the disclosure that the dwelling diagonally across the road, occupied by a tenant farmer and his family when we were there, was the schoolhouse itself, remodeled, of course, but with unmistakable lines.

If that was a surprise, then the next assertion was a surprise. Before the building was a school, it had served, in another location some distance away, as a meeting house. This sturdily built structure, once a meeting house in one place, later a school in another and now a tenant house in a third, is the one Mr. Gordon so tersely refers to in his description of Shelldown: "There is a Friends' meeting house near it, in Monmouth county." When one pauses to reflect on the number of persons in so many generations served in one of several capacities, surely this is a shrine, marked only by time, honored only after chance questions of the curious have been answered.

The Squire, in contrast to so many in the midlands who have lived with history so long that treasures have become commonplace and ancestors folk who linger about old houses in the glass and china and beds they used, touches heirlooms reverently and speaks tenderly of the past. "My great-grandfather was a Quaker preacher," he said, with twinkling eyes. "That was in the days when the meeting house at Arneytown was new. He had been a great dancer up to the time when his eloquence at meeting eliminated anything like that. Whenever he passed a tavern where the dancers were making merry, he whipped up his horse so as to hurry away, the temptation was so great to go in and join the happy company."



This room of Squire Tilton's house says "Stay awhile, won't you?" A window-screen here, electric lights there, are all that disturb the illusion of the visitor confident he has stepped across the doorsill into an earlier time.



The hall-way says, "Welcome!" A few intrusions of later years fail to disturb the venerable mien of the house that knew sturdy pioneers.

Mrs. Tilton with some of the Tilton treasures from a few cupboards. One a narrow proof-glass dropped into a keg long ago when a set quantity of liquor was part of the wages of workers on the farm.





Once the home of William Franklin, son of "Poor Richard" and last Colonial governor of New Jersey, the Franklin fruit farm as it appears today at Rancocas has little about it to recall the leader of the Tories of New Jersey.



This was once the library at Rancocas. Now they have to point it out in a back yard. The story goes that someone objected to fiction, took all books of fiction away. That, they say, ended the library.

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Until the 1860's the little building that was a meeting house and later a school was serving the Friends at meeting somewhere back from Squire Tilton's grand old house. The Squire said he remembered a man by the name of Black preaching there. He was suspiciously like his great-grandsire, good Quaker though he is, when he harked back to parties and good times in Crosswicks and the villages about, in contrast to reminiscences of more sober happenings.

"When there was a party and I was a youngster," he said—he was seventy-one when we chatted there on the porch with birds' nests within reach in the vines—"we'd hitch up two mules and the carryall'd be full." Even the recollection seemed to peel off at least ten years. "There was none of this business of getting serious over the first girl you'd hold hands with. When the invitation would come, you'd be asked to bring this one or that. If you had a roomy wagon, you might be asked to round up all the girls in the neighborhood. And if I wanted to take someone particular home, I didn't go off in a sulk if I found she was riding down the road with somebody else. There'd be plenty left for me."

The Squire denied the suggestion that Quakers of his day were strict about party hours and etiquette. Sometimes the young folk wouldn't get home till daylight, he said. There *was* one rule, however, in many of the households thereabouts. No matter what time you got in, you were expected to be at the breakfast table at eight o'clock. "Everybody had a good time dancing, then," Squire Tilton assured us soberly. "Now they have to go out in the dark and—hug!"

The brick house was built with an eye to practicality. Before it, on what is a sloping lawn today, was the original dwelling, of hand-hewn timbers. This had served the family for years and it was continued in service for the builders as well until the manor house was finished, no overnight proposition in those days. Then, and not until then, it was taken down. The new house was unveiled in all its glory and the view down the pasture to the road was unobstructed for the first time in the same climax.

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Now serving as the steps, two of them, before the door of what obviously was a later addition, not as well made as the rest, as afterthoughts are likely to be, are what at first may be mistaken for millstones. "No," the Squire shook his head, "they're from the tannery." These are relics of the days, in 1777 and after, when John Ellis was operating a tanyard down behind the house.

Tanning leather was a painstaking process then, involving the use of white oak bark and pigeon manure. "Stones like these were to soften up the leather hides," Squire Tilton explained. One can be forgiven for not recognizing a tanner's stone of long ago when he sees one for the first time. Stones such as these may be the last things he expects to find connected with an ancient tanner's trade. The tanner's stone is described best perhaps by Marion Nicholl Rawson. "It was an immensely thick stone rolled on its circumference like a cart wheel and having its edge chiseled into roughness so that in passing over the tanner's bark it would crush it easily," she says. "It revolved on a great shaft and turned by a blind horse, or ox, but was taller than either."

Unless the horse that John Ellis used was unusually small, these stones that now are steps, thrust part way under the house, were not as large as this description would indicate. Seeing them there and hearing of their former use led naturally to the inquiry whether anything more of the tannery remained.

"No," said the Squire. "All the rest was plowed under long ago." Then he seemed to remember something and took us quickly to one of the outbuildings. "This was part of the old yard at that," he corrected himself. "It was pretty far gone when I moved it up here where it might come in handy. It sort of settled a little but it still comes in useful." Leaning wearily toward the barns, there had been more than a settling, we thought. But they think nothing of moving old buildings where they want them, in this part of the country.

Although we were to hear a great deal about some of his ancestors a short time later, the Squire made scant mention of some of the Tiltons, perhaps because many of them were

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linked with important doings. In Book A, Freehold records, a John Tilton and Company is mentioned among purchases of land from the Indians, payments made in "peague" or wampumpeague, Indian money valued at one sixth of a penny, as well as in rum. Some of the items are listed "to the Sachem of ye gift land," "to a sloop hire, 10 days, with expences in provisions upon a voyage with the Patentees to Pootopeck Neck," and "to the charge of three men sent from Rhode Island to settle ye, the counterey affairs here."

These were days in the early 1700's or perhaps earlier when, it was recorded, "There is a new town in the County called Freehold, which has not been laid out and inhabited long. It does not contain as yet above 40 Families and as to its *Out* Plantations we suppose they are much the same in number with the rest and may count it about 30,000 acres."

Perhaps Sylvester Tilton, who was in the neighborhood of Freehold and Manahawkin in the days of the Refugees, had a more colorful role in history, for it was he who has been mentioned prominently many times in a variety of accounts concerning the skirmish at Manahawkin, spelled Manahawken by Mr. Salter. We have always believed the present spelling more logical since there is no apparent intention of going back to the original.

When the report came that John Bacon and his marauders were on their way, sentinels were stationed on the road. The Refugees made no secret of their approach and the clanking of their bayonets gave warning of their coming and, incidentally, of their superior number. The sentinels raced across the fields to give warning but before they could take cover, the pursuing Loyalists opened fire and Lines Pangburn, one of the organizers of the Baptist Church in Manahawkin, was killed. Sylvester Tilton, severely wounded, swore to avenge the injury on a man named Brewer, who did the damage.

Tradition says Tilton achieved his purpose. He trailed Brewer, who was heavily armed, and let it be known that he was on a vengeful errand with nothing more than his fists to aid him. Coming upon his quarry when his weapons were

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fortunately missing, Sylvester set upon him and beat him unmercifully. Then he stood glowering. "You tried to kill me once," he said. "Now I've settled with you. Get along with you and join the rest of your gang." The survivors of the Bacon outlaws were already on their way to Nova Scotia.

That steamy afternoon on the portico when everywhere but the shaded schoolhouse grove seemed uncomfortable, Squire Tilton vanished and then reappeared a moment later with a copy of the original *History of the Ellis and Tilton Families*, tracing the limbs and branches and twigs of the family tree from the first settlement of these pioneers in America in 1640. The writing was done by Charles R. Ellis, Sr., of Bordentown, whose picture at the front indicated that his beard must have been a care to keep out of the ink—it was written when he was seventy-three.

Much of what was written is a mere record of who married whom and how they fared and where but there are illuminating disclosures here and there that link the families with important events through many generations. But it would be wrong to leave the tanyard deserted before recalling it briefly to activity.

All the land around was at one time part of the Woodward tract. For a long time Squire Tilton's farm, in the midst of holdings that extended across the Woodward land and the Kirby tract as well, was known as "The Tanyard Farm." The family historian says that during most of the time "five or six men were constantly employed there making boots and shoes." For these times that was a large establishment.

The Ellises started the tanyard. Francis Ellis had come from England, probably Derbyshire, in 1640. John Ellis, his son, "learned the trade of tanner of his half-brother and began a tannery on his father's farm," his father and mother "boarding with him." "In consequence of requiring so much help for the three branches of the business," his descendant writes lovingly, and yet, with perception, "his family averaged from twenty to twenty-five while he was yet a bachelor, his sister, Meribah, being his housekeeper."

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Perhaps the family moved in. Perhaps the tanner had jobs for all and times were slack elsewhere. The Squire merely smiled at such suggestions, turning the pages of the family saga with mingled emotions. It was obvious that he had lived with the ghosts of ancestors who, on quiet evenings in the old house, had seemed to live again. For him the stone steps will never suffer the tanyard and its workers to go far away.

The chronicle discloses that no matter what version of the death of John Ellis is the true one, either was unusual, perhaps unique in the countryside, then and now. He succumbed "after skinning a hog that died from the hydrophobia" according to the conclusions of his time. Later the writer reveals that Dr. Charles Ridgway, of Bordentown, used to say that death was due to the bite of a mad fox. The passing of John Ellis was mourned by many for he "was very kind to the poor."

The names that carry through the leaves of the record are woven into a fascinating pattern. In so many cases sturdy wives outlived several husbands. One such was Elizabeth Ellis, who became Mrs. Eaves, then Mrs. Harvey and finally Mrs. Woolman, marrying one of the brothers of the father of the famous John Woolman. Later on it was a Sarah Ellis who became John's wife.

Any mention of John Woolman must link the midlands with the neighborhood of Mount Holly. By no means a forgotten town, the county seat of today is inclined to forget the village of yesterday when before and during the Revolutionary War, it was "a place of considerable importance." Historians writing in the middle 1800's told of meetings of the Legislature there, as well as the quartering of British troops on the "inhabitants." The houses so used "were designated by numbers, some of which remain, as relics of those perilous times." William IV, "then a young man, was quartered here with the British troops." There were some skirmishes in town and musketballs were "frequently found on Topetoy hill." Ask folk in Mount Holly to find Topetoy hill for you today and you'll know how much can be forgotten.

Thoughtful people will recall, however, that Stephen Girard

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came there on a peddling tour, opened a cigar store and "sold raisins, by the penny's worth, to children." Stephen is described in one old, yellowing account, quoting from an earlier source, as "a little, unnoticed man, save that the beauty of his wife, whom he married here, worried and alienated his mind." Others may remember that during those "days of peril" "a singular cannon was made by a person who afterward lived in the village. It was constructed of wrought-iron staves, hooped like a barrel with bands of the same material and then bored and breeched like other cannon." This was William Denning "who in the day of his country's need, made the only successful attempt in the world to manufacture wrought-iron cannon" and who, according to the same notice of his death at the age of ninety-four, tried a second one while in Mount Holly "but could get no one to assist him who could stand the heat, which is said to have been so severe as to melt the lead buttons of his coat."

The unfinished piece went to the Philadelphia arsenal and the one completed, "captured by the British at the battle of Brandywine," went to the Tower of London. The British offered an annuity to the one who should instruct them in the manufacture of such a cannon "but the patriotic blacksmith preferred obscurity and poverty in his own beloved country, though the country for which he had done so much kept her purse closed from the veteran soldier until near the period of his decease."

There was no intention of wandering afield but, you see, the Ellises led us to John Woolman and John took us to Mount Holly and there was nothing we could do about it. The Woolman house is standing, of course, as is also the Springfield meeting house where he was heard in days before he had become famous as "the celebrated traveling preacher of the Friends" although the meeting house has been reconstructed since the time of the disastrous fire. John Woolman is by no means Mount Holly's private property for the whole countryside knew him and certainly he visited his uncle, as well as the Ellises, in Upper Freehold Township.

SHELLTOWN: ELLISDALE

John Woolman's *Journal* is a delightful piece of writing in itself. In it he reveals his intimate reactions to the world and all about him, almost from the time of his birth, in 1720 in Burlington County, through days when he lived with his parents and "wrought on his father's plantation" and on beyond the time he "hired himself to tend a shop and keep the books" of a man in Mount Holly who taught him the tailor's trade. Unquestionably John met Sarah Ellis on one of his preaching journeys, for his first religious tour was in 1743 and his marriage was in 1749. He had unusual ideas and ideals and he boldly declared them, campaigning against slavery, against "the too liberal use of spirituous liquors," "the custom of wearing too costly apparel" which was an odd notion for a tailor, and the refusal of pay for lodging wayfarers in his house, even enemy soldiers. It would have been interesting to have known Sarah's reaction to all this.

Certainly there were goings-on in Crosswicks, and Shelltown and beyond which the man who "allowed his beard to grow, and when of inconvenient length, clipped it with scissors," who "wore clothing of the natural color; the woollen white, the linen flax" would not have approved, for all his liberal views on many things. Presumably he was alone when he died of smallpox in England in 1772, on a preaching mission in the country of Yorkshire, Derbyshire and adjoining counties from which emigrants had come to be his friends in Burlington and Monmouth Counties.

It is probable that John was dead and buried in England before the Ellis tanyard was conceived but the forebears of the Woodwards, Eaves and Furmans had known him and had heard him at meeting. Susan Ellis married Thomas Furman at Arneytown meeting house which Woolman may have known as well as Springfield and Crosswicks and Mount Holly. There was a tailoring man among the Ellises, too, later on, Charles J. Ellis, the son of William and Rebecca, joining the firm of Lippincott & Parry and dealing in "cloths, cassimeres and tailors' trimmings" at Market and Second Streets, Philadelphia, a warehouse district today.

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There was an Ellis, too, the Squire's family chronicle revealed, who was filled with John Woolman's unrest and uniqueness. This was Abraham Ellis who in 1834 started a business in Bordentown, failed, tried schoolteaching in the West, came back to Marlton and then was heard of, at the last, at Watervliet, N. Y., a leader "in the Society of Shakers."

On other branches of the ever-spreading and prolific tree were John Henry, believed of German parentage and a brick-maker who provided the bricks for the old Presbyterian Church at Allentown; Rebecca Wright, "an esteemed minister of the Friends" who also went to England on a religious visit when such travel was rare, as well as Lairds, Cowgills, Freedss and more Tiltens. One especially notable member of the cast was Uncle William Burtis who in the early 1800's lived at Lamberton, and later between Crosswicks and Allentown.

Perhaps Uncle William was one of the family historian's favorites—certainly he was one of Squire Tilton's. There might be ghosts of strict Quakers whom the Squire would admire, there might be tanners, brickmakers and merchants of serious mien and there might be plodding farmers worrying about their fields in darksome corners of the old house but for Uncle William Burtis there was a special smile, a livelier twinkle. Uncle William, very corpulent and short, "was considered very good company in the seaside parties" of the family and its friends.

"Twelve or fifteen farmers would go together in their own wagons and some large farmers would take their own teams," reads the account. "They would take their own provisions, a cook and a fiddler, and would hire a house for a week." These parties "kept up every summer for over forty years."

Just imagine the scene, the long trip through the countryside to the sea—with Uncle William and his multiple chins. The concluding sentence of the entry, written with a little sign of regret that the genealogist wasn't in one of the wagons, is: "They enjoyed themselves without any of the restraints attending the fashionable watering places of the present day."

SHELLTOWN: ELLISDALE

This was at Squan, or Manasquan as it is now. Even so! Restraints? Uncle Charles, call Uncle William to this side of the boardwalk and tell us what you think now!

When we called on the Squire a second time we came away knowing that his ghosts will be at home in the old brick house—as long as he's there to guard the things they loved. Kentucky toddy glasses, old Sandwich glass, hobnail glass, old pottery, Wedgwood china—whole sets that recall parties, weddings and even laborious reading of wills are everywhere. There are desks and tables to make an expert gasp, sideboards and overcrowded cupboards to produce a permanent goggle in the amateur. Beyond the wide hall and its wide stair of simple dignity, there are rooms overflowing with heirlooms, recalling the generations of hands that touched them.

As we gazed up at an oil painting of Daniel Webster on the back of which was a note from his wife, who should know, saying it was a good likeness, an old-fashioned proof-glass had been produced. This was used when wages on the farm included three drinks a day for the hired help. The hands were entitled to as much as the cylinder would yield when dipped in the barrel at the end of a bit of catgut.

"They used to grade the liquor according to the bead on the glass," said the Squire. "But they didn't have to here—it was always good, always pure apple, made down there across the valley."

"All in the family—all in the same house," boasted Mrs. Tilton proudly, in her twittery way. "Others don't care for all this, maybe, but *he* does. Oh, my yes, *he* does!" She was closing the cupboards, inviting continued inspection on our own if we cared to stay longer. "All in one house, that's unusual, isn't it? *He* loves it all—and so do I! Sometimes it's as if all the Ellises and all the Tiltons and their friends for years and years were here together. Yes, it is. All of them here, around us, all the time!"

The Squire's face was aglow. He had forgotten that he had said his son liked Florida better and that when he was gone, the old house. . . . Generations *were* at his elbow and no mis-

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take! It was as if he heard the music of a country fiddler, as if he were with his great-grandfather, passing an inn, and fighting down the inclination to go in and join the dance. Something had made him young again, in happy reverie, as he drove his wagon along a hay-scented road with a girl on the seat beside him and more in the wagon. "All of them here, around us. . . ."

Even if they were shadows, memories, faces through a mist, the Squire liked the thought, the idea of a party.

Chapter 9

RANCOCAS: ONCE ANKOKAS

"And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?"

—LORD BYRON: 1788-1824

THERE are those who will contend that Rancocas is not a forgotten town, that so charming a village with so many shaded houses of substantial brick can never become quite forgotten. And yet, Rancocas has a past, a colorful past, much of which is time out of mind. For that matter, Rancocas wasn't Rancocas at all in its earliest days, but Ankokas, and later on, Ancocas.

George DeCou, who wrote a scholarly little pamphlet on the neighborhood of Rancocas not so long ago, has declared that the name itself is of Indian origin and that the first reference he was able to find was in a letter, written in 1648, telling of a tribe of Amarongs living along the Pensauken Creek when "King Ramcock, who with forty men, dwelt five miles farther up the river."

Not long after that the Indian chieftain had left such a mark that a deed referred to the Rancocas Creek of today as the Ramkokes or Rankokes Kil. Peter Lindstrom's map of 1655 offers the variation "Rancoquess Kyl," declaring it to be the creek of the Rancoquess Indians. It may be quite true that early Swedes and Englishmen began the name with an "r" but as late as 1853 a wedding certificate, parchment twenty-three and a half inches by twenty-eight, spelled it without, as "Ancocas." Anyway, authorities including Dr. Charles A. Philhower have maintained that "r" is at best an ugly sound and the Indians in New Jersey scorned it from the beginning.

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It is supposed that before the coming of the white men, there was an Indian town of considerable size and importance up the stream from Centreton, the hamlet you'll find at the end of the bridge across Rancocas Creek. Not far from the other end of the span is a cemetery, a Friends burying ground, often ignored altogether by those who know Rancocas, the village. Even today old residents will tell you that the Friends cemetery is "on top" of the one used by the Indians in earlier times, when Indian funerals ended in a procession of canoes to the place of burial. Close your eyes and imagine the creek without the bridge, imagine the funeral of a brave of King Ramcoke moving sadly with the up-tide from the Indian village. Then, surely, you are in the midst of forgotten scenes—and there are many, many more.

We heard about them one evening when descendants of the Leeds and Haines and Buzbys got together for reminiscences. We heard about the first Meeting House, built of logs, down where the burying ground slopes to the creek. We heard about an older road, lost forever, that followed the twists and turns of the creek bank. We heard about Paradise, Turpentine, Timbuctoo and Comical Corner and days when all of them were hamlets at crossroads Rancocas knew well. Now Turpentine is Unionville, above Mount Holly, marked by an automobile graveyard; no one seems to know what made Comical Corner so funny, and as for Timbuctoo, they call it "Bucto" now and link it with a ghost all its own.

"Paradise?" echoed Miss Rachel Haines, whose memory clicked with names and marriages and events of the rise and fall of Rancocas all through the evening. "Can't say that I know but one and thee knows well where that is!"

Although it is admitted that the Rancocas of today goes back little beyond the early 1800's, the beginnings of a village were to be found along the creek at the edge of a country which for years on end had found favor with Indians seeking sites for settlements long before. When Quakers came from England, landing in Burlington and moving across to the neighborhood of Rancocas later on, the days of the Indians

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were numbered and they knew it well, friendly as they were.

Before leaving the Indians to sleep there in the graveyard where all but the last of the first families have forgotten them, there's a story worth recounting, for, as much as it seems to have been repeated, we had missed it till that humid July evening. It is the story of Ashatama, an old Indian who, according to Mr. DeCou, said he was the last of his tribe but who, somehow, forgot Indian Ann, his daughter, who used to wander around the countryside weaving and selling baskets until 1894, when she died, you may recall, in the tepee a half-breed son had built for her. Forgetful, Ashatama may have been, but he was a very wise man.

Ashatama came to the home of Granville Woolman, Miss Haines said, and asked for a quantity of cider. Indians may have been hurried to extinction by early Dutch and Swedish rum but they got nothing intoxicating from Rancocas pioneers, for even now, as the tale is told, you will hear that "the cider wasn't hard." Ashatama was told he could have as much cider as he could put in a basket of his own weaving.

Perhaps the father of Dr. Granville Woolman allowed his eyes to sparkle as he considered that he had "stumped" the Indian. Ashatama, who lived in a log cabin on the Woolman farm, went away without so much as a word. Later, it was apparent that he had begun to weave almost at once. If he had woven tightly before, he outdid himself this time. Time was no object, for a promise was a promise, and besides, the coming of cold weather was to have something to do with it.

"Then," said Miss Haines, "when the bargain was almost forgotten, Ashatama appeared with his basket. He said nothing about having dipped it in the creek several times and then allowing it to freeze as it hung from a tree—until Dr. Woolman's father saw the ice. The basket was cider-tight, for a while, at least, and Granville Woolman filled it without a murmur."

Although Thomas Gordon spends his time describing the "Rancocus creek" with not the slightest mention of a village, there were pioneers along the creek itself which he locates

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"passing by the town of Mount Holly, to which place it is navigable." "The south branch," wrote the *Gazetteer*, "consists of several streams, which have their source in Burlington county, and flow northwestward, uniting at Eayrstown, and thence running by Lumberton, to the junction with the north branch, four miles below that town. This branch is navigable to Eayrstown . . . the wood, timber, and produce of a large extent of country find their way to market by this stream."

This was written in the 1830's. Barber and Howe, chronicling developments in 1844, speak of Rancocas as "a new and handsome village." The first bridge over the creek from Centreton was built in 1832. But, although there may have been but two or three dwellings where Rancocas is today, it is obvious that there were houses along the creek inasmuch as wood, timber and produce were moving down to the Delaware River. There was the old house now occupied by Maurice E. Lundy, at the corner of the Mount Holly and Centreton roads, which Miss Haines declared to be the oldest in town, and surely there was the home of Asher Woolman. There is a deed in Mount Holly, dated 1771, which mentions the Woolman plantation with several others, as well as "Governor Franklin's Deer Park."

"Phebe Stokes says the Lundy house was once a tenant house on the Woolman plantation," declared Miss Haines. In this and similar assertions, she startled us with names. There in hardly more than a line there were three, and of such was the essence of the earliest Rancocas, or the Ancocas before it. John Stokes never came from England but his name appears on the survey made for the first home of Thomas and Mary Barnard Stokes from whom most of the New Jersey Stokes are descended. They differentiate between the John Woolmans in Rancocas by calling one "the pioneer" and the other "the Journalist" for it was the pioneer, grandfather of the Abolitionist, who lived on the Rancocas as early as 1679. As for the name of Miss Haines herself—well, it goes back beyond the "later" days to the Grovatt farm, part of the Green plantation of 1681, a house nearly 250 years old.

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We said something about all that and hitched it to a compliment for the remarkable memory of Miss Haines. "Thee is chiding me," she said quickly. "I'm sure I don't remember all that." We said something about the name of Lundy, too, wondering aloud if the amiable gentleman we met in Newtown, Pennsylvania, some years before, was a relative. "Hardly," said Miss Haines, with a snap. "He's only a brother. His great-grandfather, Joseph, was here in 1810. The Lundys sold lots of lots—sounds odd, doesn't it?—in Rancocas."

Mention of lots was signal for the producing of a map, two or three of which were said to be buried away in Rancocas trunks and cabinets. On it were located more streets than even those who claimed to know the village well knew it had. There was Union Street, Olive Street and Bridge Avenue. There were Green Street, Second, Third and Fourth Streets and Jennings and Borton's Avenue, all with adjoining lots carefully marked and measured. Today there is no Union Street, nor are there Fourth Street or Jennings Avenue. The Burlington road was the Beverly-Mount Holly Turnpike when the map was made by Charles Stokes at a time when, according to Miss Rachel, there was something of a dispute over the proposed names in the collection.

Not that there wasn't some meaning in all of them. Olive Street wasn't chosen to honor a preserved green oval but to recall Thomas Olive and his mill, in action as far back as 1682 and operated by a stream marked on the map before us as "Olive's Mill Creek." Bridge Avenue was the route to the Centreton span. Green Street revived recollection of the Green plantation. The Bortons, even when their name was spelled or misspelled Boarton, were there in 1680. Thomas Olive was one of three men, we were reminded, who, with Dr. Daniel Wills and Benjamin Scott, served on William Penn's commission to buy land from the Indians and work out a plan to govern it. Many of the Rancocas "firsts" were imbued with a fever to push on and, as Mr. DeCou remarked some years ago, had moved elsewhere by 1700. Thus we were honored in talking to descendants of those who remained.

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"That Lundy house," Miss Haines said, "was the Ezra Haines house. It was a small house once. Ezra married a second time and made it bigger. As thee heard me say, it was only a tenant house once."

Someone was inclined to minimize the importance of Olive's Mill Creek while the map was still in evidence. They said it was more like a ditch. "Ditch!" said Elgar Buzby. "It was a creek last week." Virtually the whole countryside had been flooded recently. Mr. Buzby and his brother, Harvey, were the only descendants of Nicholas Buzby who purchased the Franklin Park farm in 1717. "There used to be a gristmill below the graveyard sure enough. I can remember a stone in there somewhere. Couldn't tell you where it is now, though."

The millstone wasn't all that Mr. Buzby recalled.

"Did you ever hear of doublebricks?" he asked. "Thought you hadn't. They were eight inches square and four inches thick. Ordinarily, the old bricks were four by four by eight. I dug them out of the foundations one time. Don't know what I did with them. They must be around somewhere."

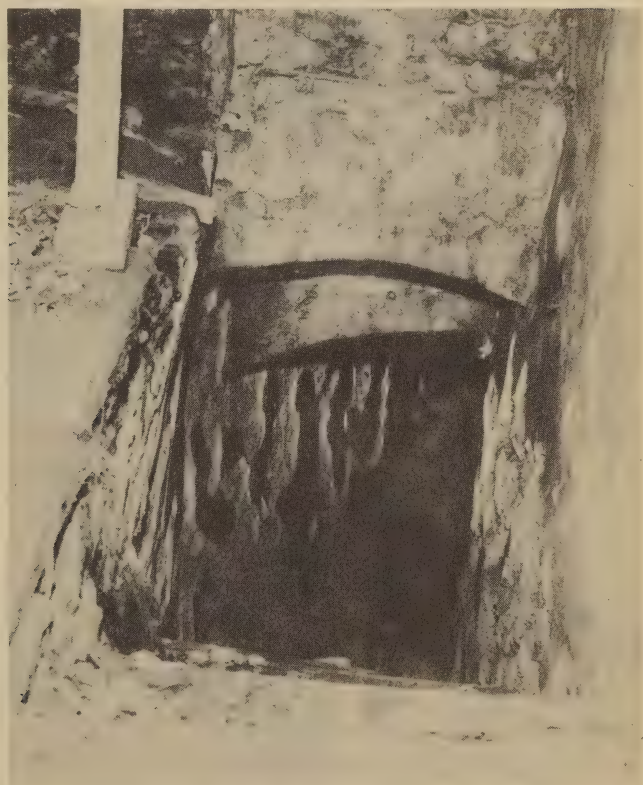
It was then that the huge wedding certificate came to light, signed by the forty-five witnesses to the wedding of "Jacob H. Leeds, of Willingborough Township and Margaret L. Woolman, daughter of Granville S. Woolman and Phebe S. Woolman." Elizabeth Leeds Buzby, who died just a few months before our quest to the village, was the mother of Elgar, whose sister, Phebe Leeds Jones, lives in Moorestown. There was no doubt about it: although the certificate was dated 1853, the name of the town was plainly inscribed "Ancocas."

Much will be missed both by the traveler who hurries through to Mount Holly and the more casual wanderer, too, but the bricks and the brick houses that line the shaded streets will be cause for query. Many have concluded that all the bricks came from England. This is not true.

"The blue bricks in the Meeting House, the one that's still here, came from England," Miss Haines declared, "but the other bricks are native. Oh, there were brickyards all about us then. Perhaps you've seen the chimney of the one down



In Centerton, reminiscent of days when plantations stretched down to the water, is the old Hollinshead house. Now windows stare like sightless eyes, and rooms have emptied out even their memories.



In the Hollinshead house there is a tunnel that oozes with clammy damp and mystery. Those who remembered, destroyed such ghostly illusions, although it reaches far under the old garden beyond the house. The Friends' Meeting House at Barnegat seems mostly deserted now, and yet around it lie the bones of sturdy pioneers and those tossed up on the shore.



The Friends' Meeting House at Barnegat seems mostly deserted now, and yet around it lie the bones of sturdy pioneers and those tossed up on the shore.



It was an inn when Joseph Bonaparte and Prince Murat, came by elegant coach from Bordentown to Barnegat along a stage road which, itself, is buried deep in the woods.



Once Barnegat's schoolhouse, probably built of wood cut back in the Pines and milled near by. Now it's part of a boatyard, in Barnegat.

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along the creek—I'm sure it's still there." We assured her that it was. "There was Berryan's and George Borton's and Charles Hulme's down at the end of the lane—Hulme's supplied old H. B. Smith, at Smithville, with the native brick for his new operations."

Miss Rachel declared that Rancocas was "a business village then." "That building in my yard was a store—I can remember when they moved it with chains and horses to Bridge Street. There was a gristmill, two wheelwright shops, one of Ezra Haines and the other of William Fish, and a blacksmith shop run by Johnnie Whitcraft, and Theodore, his father, before him. When they went away, the smithy became an old woodshed—now it's gone altogether."

One of the unusual features of the Meeting House in Rancocas is the fact that there's a thick wall dividing the interior, with each half divided again for men and women who attend meeting. When the Friends divided in 1827, Miss Haines told us, the Orthodox group retained the Meeting House and the Hicksites held meetings in various homes. That seemed rather unnecessary to some and so it was decided that while the Friends might be divided in concepts of the faith that was no reason why the dissenters should be without a suitable meeting place. So a thick wall was placed in the midst so that both Hicksites and Orthodox could meet at the same time without offering disturbance to one another.

"Does thee remember about Samuel Haines and Samuel Williams?" asked Miss Rachel of the circle. These two, it was certain, held out for no such peaceable settlements. Samuel, the miller, seemed to propose things to rile Mr. Williams. "I don't see why those shutters should be down," Samuel Haines would say, whereupon Samuel Williams, his head erect and his eyes flashing fire, would stalk out of meeting and go home.

Nor was another group of Quakers satisfied with such amicable tendencies as the wall recalls.

These were the Wilburites, Miss Haines informed us. They subdivided the Orthodox fundamentalists, flying off to

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the other extreme and declaring that "the Orthodox were not strict or plain enough for them!"

While thinking of the Haineses, Miss Rachel harked back to Ezra's second wife "who was Phoebe Peirce, one of the Peirces of the business college family." "She wrote poetry," she said, as if the statement told all that was necessary. In the same manner she gave full acclaim to James Hilliard, her grandfather, when she was speaking of the old Orthodox School, once behind the Meeting House, and some of the Rancocas teachers, Samuel Gummere and William Schemele. "Does thee know what Grandfather did during recess time?" she asked, when we were apparently much too slow with a scurrying pencil. "Well, he made quill pens for the scholars."

Suddenly we were hearing of days that were not so long ago but are almost as effectively forgotten, days when there was steamer service along the Rancocas to Philadelphia. "Why, there was a Mrs. Stevens who moved here from Chester," said Miss Rachel, "and she brought all her things by boat. Seems impossible now, doesn't it? *The Barclay* used to go down to Philadelphia one day and come back the next on a regular schedule. Many of the women used to go, getting on with their knitting and sewing at Hainesport or Centreton."

There were "two or three" doctors in town in the old days and apparently they had plenty to do. Dr. Granville Woolman was one of them. He was a Thomsonian doctor, one who believed in cures by hot application, herb medicines and complete rest for the patient. "Composition was a great cure-all," Elgar Buzby interrupted. "It still is," declared Mrs. Buzby. "There's many a stove in Rancocas neighborhood with 'composition' hot and ready on the back of the stove in winter." Somebody recalled finding a bottle of Dr. Woolman's composition hidden away on a shelf for half a century and added, "It was still good."

It may have been "good" as far as results were concerned but from all accounts, it was unpleasant enough to take. Even the remembrance of it brought wry faces that night.

Miss Haines recalled a Dr. William L. Martin who, after

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arriving to set up a practice in Rancocas, first had to build a wagon with his own hands before he could make his calls. Surely these were rugged days! Dr. Martin came from Chester County, Pennsylvania, Miss Haines said, and had a bedroom at the back and an office at the front of a part of a house owned by Louis Fish, the carpet-weaver.

"This was always an aristocratic village," Miss Rachel insisted, more than once. Somebody spoke of John Hancock's family tree and the fact that Betsy Leeds Tait, our hostess, was among the branches. Someone else stressed the Leeds and we tried to link them with the Leeds we met at Leeds Point, where the early members of the family were writing almanacs before Poor Richard. The Leeds of Rancocas go back to Thomas Leeds of Shrewsbury, whose son, Daniel, was pioneering somewhere near Burlington in the 1680's. "Why, the population's smaller now than it ever was," Miss Haines declared. "There's certainly less than the two hundred the books used to boast about. So often there's just one person to a house."

Once there was a library back of Maurice Lundy's home. "One day," our informant went on blithely, "someone got mad and went down and took all the fiction out of it. That ended the library—although the building's still there." Once the galleries in the Meeting House were full and now the galleries are gone. Once the store at the corner was crowded "of a Seventh Day evening." "Now," said Miss Haines, "you have to make a noise to let them know you're inside." Once the turnpike was an important highway, at least we can say "more important" than now, for there were toll gates—two between Rancocas and Mount Holly and two more besides, "one at Cousin Barclay Hilliard's store and a second near King street, Mount Holly. No," said Miss Rachel, correcting herself, "those were the two between Rancocas and Mount Holly. The other was between here and Beverly."

We turned to watch our hostess rediscovering all the secret compartments of an old desk beside which we had been writing calmly, not knowing that this was a 1678 piece which had

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known more of Rancocas than we would ever find out. Then, just as ears went up to catch what had been said about a Sheraton sideboard "across the street" of which there is but one duplicate and that at Mount Vernon, reminiscences centered on the old Rancocas Lyceum group, of which, we were told, one member survived, in Moorestown. This society was considered and still is looked upon as the outstanding literary group of Burlington County, offering everything from declamations and debates to Shakespearean readings every week in the 1870's. The headquarters erected by the group, often called "the Quaker Theatre," is now the fire house.

Governor William Franklin, last Colonial governor of New Jersey, must have known Rancocas well, for "Strawberry Hill," the farm that was his, is located perhaps a mile away in the direction of Beverly. The farm was owned by Buzbys in 1717 and it was back in the possession of Buzbys, descendants of the others, when we were there. There's a record showing that one John Smith, of Burlington, sold it to Governor Franklin, Benjamin Franklin's son, in 1770.

Mr. Smith's possession of the property and how he acquired it has been celebrated for years in one of the unusual stories of the vicinity. At least it was a man named Smith who, with a nightcap on his head and a hope of sleeping late in his heart, thrust up a window and violently objected to the sale of the farm being advertised so loudly by a town crier armed with bell and bellow. "What are you asking for the place?" Mr. Smith demanded, out of sorts. The price was given him. "Then I'll take it," he said, "if you'll only stop that infernal yowling up and down the street!"

If the price was reasonable, Mr. Smith—and it is to be hoped this was the John Smith of legend as well as deed—he must have made considerable profit. At least he suffered no substantial loss, for when Governor Franklin made the purchase the figure was two thousand pounds proclamation, a term going back to 1704 and Queen Anne. Subsequent events changed many lives and Franklin, who sided with the Crown, was back in England in 1785, an exile. The property was

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transferred to a son, William Temple Franklin, who soon tired of life as a Burlington County Squire and sold the place to Robert Morris, noted Revolutionary financier, in 1790.

By 1793 the plantation was being advertised for sale in Dunlap's American Advertiser as "an Estate called Franklin Parke." In the advertisement the creek's name is spelled Ancocas and the tract is described as "600 acres of land, partly arable, some meadow and the rest woodland—on which are erected three farm houses, in different places, so that it may be divided into three farms. . . . The principal house was fitted up for his own occupancy by Mr. Franklin and this estate is deemed to be well adapted for the use of a genteel family as well as for a farm." The subscriber is Robert Morris himself.

Another of the famous schoolmasters of Rancocas was Mayberry McVaugh and he it was who purchased the grand old property in 1822, establishing a school for boys famous in its time as The Franklin Park Academy. George DeCou very illuminatingly balances the pros and cons to show that the house itself may be the same and again may not. The *Historical Collections* of 1844 records definitely that Governor Franklin's residence was destroyed in a fire. An account of Willingborough, now Willingboro, Township in 1876 says that the house stood on the site of the Franklin Park Academy. In Rancocas, Charles Stokes read a paper before the West Jersey Surveyors' Association in 1868, saying the original house had been obliterated 25 years before. Another Stokes, grandson of Charles and his namesake, declared a desire to prove the house an original but, in addition to documents, found the style of architecture different from the last Colonial governor's time. Yet Howard Wills, great-grandson of Hudson Buzby, owner of the farm in 1850, used to say this was the first Franklin mansion and so did many others.

The important thing, perhaps, is that Rancocas streets were trod by pioneers who remembered the last governor surveying his near-by plantation and that Benjamin Franklin himself was there for long visits, trying out agricultural experiments from

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time to time, the same experiments in scientific farming which he had in mind when he bought a farm near Burlington in 1747, a homestead he never occupied. Governor Franklin chose the wrong side and, after his arrest, probably at Franklin Park, was tried at Burlington and subsequently banished. Park Road, still wandering across the banks of the creek north of the site of the old house, recalls the deer park which the Franklins established. Today the tract is called the Franklin Fruit Farm.

What the village itself lacks in age beyond the century is made up for in the ancient mien of its houses, as well as the lost glamour of several old manors fast falling apart along the creek, especially below Centreton, over Borton's Landing way. Borton's landing goes back to John Borton who came to Burlington from Northamptonshire, England, in 1679, the record of his crossing indicating that the English Quakers he left behind thought New Jersey an "isle." John Borton was high in the officialdom of earliest days in the neighborhood.

Records of schools are many in Rancocas. John Gummere, who taught there from 1800 to 1811, with a starting stipend of two hundred dollars per year, went to Burlington later on to set up his renowned Academy for Boys and still later became president of Haverford College. The little brick Quaker schoolhouse by the side of the road was witness to a whole procession of teachers as well as pupils who became famous in later life. Charles Stokes, Master McVaugh, Rachel Hunt, T. Chalkley Matlack and Florence Winner are other instructors whose work should be permanently recorded. The school life, as well as meetings of various literary societies, kept things humming from the first 1800's on—if The Literary and Philological Society didn't have something on, then the Beneficial Society or The Select Literary Society were up to something.

George DeCou has put it so well in closing when he says, "the parlor literary society and the lyceum, though not necessarily Quaker institutions, have always flourished in Quaker communities and their passing is to be deeply regretted. The

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mingling of old and young in intellectual fellowship had an educational as well as a social value that cannot be fully measured today. We of the older generations look back to these gatherings with a joy and satisfaction that even the memory of long rides through snow or rain, over roads of mud or sand, cannot lessen."

The feeling of decadence has crept in, you see, although Rancocas has shut the evidence out, for the most part. Buildings have been moved about, half of one has been chopped off here to add to another one over there but ruins have been cleared away. Some old structure, long locked and with weeds across its doorsill guards its story of departed glory well. Not so with the old plantation houses across the creek.

One afternoon we wandered up the clay road from Centreton, beyond the little store of Jersey ironstone across from where the hotel is said to have been. Abruptly, at a tiny cross-turn, we came upon an ancient manor of tremendous size. There were initials and a date at one end: "T.T.H.—1757." We wondered if they were authentic. We found pegged beams under the roof on the third floor, each with its Roman numerals recalling painstaking carpenters of early days for whom each piece of timber must match. Then, written in the plaster of the third-floor chimney we found this inscription: "Found, 1757—Rebuilt, 1859." The latter date was probably that of an obvious addition, with its separate stairway, with the third floors communicating only through a window which had not been removed.

Prowling about in the cellar, we discovered suddenly a subterranean passage, a large roomy cavern damp and icy cool despite the heat of the day overhead. The passage had been carefully walled and the floor bricked. Light dropped into the clammy dark through a circular shaft, brick-lined, while in a rounded cave further back there was a well. We dropped a brick and almost a full minute elapsed before we heard the faraway splash of water in the depths.

The old house was constructed of brown native stone, later overcast. The stairway inside was in sturdy condition

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but both the front and rear porches were askew. Many invaders, obviously foreign summer farmhands' children, from the names they dug into the plaster, had caused all sorts of damage and more perceptive intruders had taken away all the valuable metal, hinges, shutter-holds and even a door or two. Glass had been smashed from the windows and even some of the sashes were broken hopelessly. At the back, the later addition of 1859 included an enclosed portico, with a brick floor and oven. The portico was lighted, apparently, by latticed windows, looking out on a long line of stable-sheds where we found more pegs, more marks of the adze. From the portico, long a haven for insects and birds, there was another challenging stairway.

Here the going was precarious, too, for although there had been a hollow sound from footfalls in the cellar cave, this one was full of cobwebs, broken bottles, an old bung and fragments of almost everything. Suddenly, in the plaster beside the steps, we found two names, J. C. Davis and Jacob Hollinshead, each with the year 1865 inscribed beside them. We wondered then if the name Hollinshead had gone back beyond 1865 to the initials "T.T.H."

As odd as was the discovery that the rebuilding processes of recurrent times had eliminated fireplaces all through the house was the conclusion that the outside passage led to a second cavern, obviously partly on top of the one we had entered from the cellar inside. The rounded shaft, through which we had gained a filtered light into the other depths, cut through the "roof" of this one to the yard behind the house. The well we had seen was obviously under an odd-shaped structure, then sadly at an angle. The passion of a bygone era for secret panels and compartments expressed itself in a battered built-in china cupboard drawer—which we found, and opened, and revealed as empty.

The spacious lawn, then a tangle that recalled shrubs, wide drives and well-placed trees, the lost glamour of it all, bade us come back. Return we did, in the failing light of evening, pressing on up a road time had cut across the fields. This time we came upon the ruin of still another mansion, almost

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hidden in once majestic trees, forsaken in a tangle of myrtle closer to the stream.

Mrs. Caroline Leeds Warrick, over in Rancocas, who wasn't home the night they held a council for our benefit over there, put us on the trail of the background of that old house and its subterranean passages, which, after all the build-up, weren't mysterious after all. "I remember the house when I was a girl," she said. "It was a lovely place. So was that old house beyond it. I just can't bring myself to go back and see how they've fallen apart."

Mrs. Warrick said that Mrs. Levi Dudley, in Moorestown, was "one of the Hollinshead girls." "We were girls together. Really, I don't think those passages were for more than edibles, but Mrs. Dudley will know."

We regretted that we never knew Mrs. Warrick's father, Henry Hallowell Leeds. "He could have told you so much of all that will be forgotten now," smiled Mrs. Warrick. "There were the old snowball fights between the boys of the Orthodox school and the boys who went to the other school after the division of the friends. Don't call them Hicksites—call them Race Street Friends. The number of students was about even and whichever school had the most boys on time the morning after a snow, that was the school that won."

Mrs. Warrick didn't remember much except talk about the "Bucto" ghost at Timbuctoo. "But there was the Witch House," she recalled suddenly. "There was a strange old woman who lived there when we were girls. We used to hurry by, wondering."

We were wrong, first of all, about the placing of the letters. Mrs. Dudley said they were "T.H.T." and not "T.T.H." at all. The Tallmans were there before the Hollinsheads—the "T" is for Thomas and the "H" for Hannah. When the Tallmans were there, the plantation included three hundred acres. When the Hollinsheads came there was but a hundred and thirty-one. Renovated in 1861 and enlarged in 1865, the farm was sold in 1925, having been in the Hollinshead family since 1822.

"I was the last owner," said Mrs. Dudley, ". . . the last

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owner in the family. Yes, I was born there and I lived on there till the old house was sold. My three daughters were born there, too. How does it look now?"

There was no need to tell Mrs. Dudley how the house appeared. Her memory for details of it was amazing. "Seventeen steps lead down to the cellar, that storage-room," she said. "Parallel to it and directly above is a similar cellar, a little shorter. No, there was no secret about it. The upstairs room was used for storing potatoes. The lower room was a natural cold-storage vault used for keeping milk and butter."

The well, Mrs. Dudley said, was forty feet deep, with the ingenious shaft for light above it. "It was the real thing and it never went dry," she went on, smiling reminiscently. "As for that opening in the wall—well, that was only for repairing the pump."

Our curiosity didn't seem quite as foolish when Mrs. Dudley admitted that even in the old days, those underground rooms excited considerable comment from company. The garret, it seems, was used for curing smoked ham and beef. Here was a house on an old farm that was virtually self-sustaining, as all the plantations along the Rancocas once had been.

Mrs. Dudley wasn't reticent about her age. "I was born in 1874," she said. "Father was Joshua Hollinshead. I can remember him telling us about political speeches made by Calhoun during the Civil War. For some reason the political rallies were held in a field not far from the old house. Odd, isn't it, how a little time wipes all that out?"

Yes, it was odd. Given a few years of idleness, one or two more of rough use, an old house concludes it isn't wanted any more and falls apart amid the ruin of its memories. The old lawns become a tangle, trees tumble and empty windows stare like blind eyes at the sky. What chance has an adjoining field that trembled under the tread of great men pledged to ardent causes? What can there remain for it when the man at the plow has gone, when silence replaces the lowing herd and cackling hens in the barnyard, when the old storage chambers

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are empty and imaginative wanderers stumble down them to emerge with fantastic theories?

Perhaps there was an Edmund Hollinshead in the neighborhood in 1776, for then, in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, "an English servant man named James Morris, about five feet eight inches high of a dark complexion, with black bushy hair" who "talks in the West country dialect" was advertised as having run away over such a signature. The same advertisement appeared in the *Pennsylvania Ledger*, with four dollars reward offered anyone who would secure "said servant in any gaol in this province." The place mentioned in the notice was Chester Township, Burlington County.

A notice of the marriage of "Mr. William Gamble, of Constitution Hill, New Jersey, to Miss Elizabeth Tallman, daughter of Peter Tallman, Esqr." appeared in the *Pennsylvania Journal* July 17, 1776. Joseph Sharp, seeking the whereabouts of "a Negroe man, named Toney," declared "Toney" had been seen at James Talman's on Oldman's Creek, in Gloucester County. A James Tallman was given listing as a deserter by "Black David" Forman in the same year and Peter Tallman sought capture of an indentured saddler from Burlington that Fall. Ghosts?

It was some time after that when, still in quest of information in old books, usually borrowed because, as collectors' items, they are beyond the reach of modest purse, we came upon an interesting footnote appended in Samuel Smith's early account of affairs and trends in the New Jersey of 1682. The fact that the name "Hollinshead" with exactly the same spelling, appeared in the entrance of the cellar cave and the ancient aside was almost startling. Mr. Smith is discussing shortages of food and the added hardship of a powder-and-shot scarcity among the early settlers. Suddenly, he declares:

"Instances of their wants are many, and the supplies sometimes unexpected; the family of John Hollinshead, who lived near Rankokas, being unprovided with powder and shot, were in distress, when Hollinshead the younger, then a lad about 13, going through a cornfield, saw a turkey; throwing a stick to kill it, a second came in sight; he killed both and

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carried them home: Soon after, at the house of Thomas Eves, he saw a buck; and telling Eves, he set his dogs, who followed it to the Rankokas river, then frozen; the buck running on the ice, slid upon his side; the dogs seized it; Hollinshead coming up with a knife, eagerly jumped upon it; the buck rose with him on his back and sprung forward, his feet spreading asunder, slip'd gently down on his belly, and gave Hollinshead a respite from danger, and opportunity of killing him: By these means two families were supplied with food to their great joy. These, and such like instances, in a new settled country, show, with the distress, the relief that sometimes unexpectedly attends it."

And, we thought parenthetically, this particular instance proved without a doubt that Junior Hollinshead, either from family desperation or individual skill, was no mean shot as a hunter armed only with a stick, nor a slouch when he spotted a buck, given time to go home for a knife.

It is the same Mr. Smith who later, in recording Thomas Olive's death in about 1692, reveals him as one of the London commissioners in 1677, and "sometime governor, in which station he behaved with great circumspection and prudence; while a common magistrate he had a ready method of business, often doing it to good effect in the seat of judgment on the stumps in his meadows. . . ."

The ancient houses on the Rancocas side of the creek, however, present great contrast. For the most part, they have been maintained as they were in the beginning, with direct descendants or members of the family making homes beneath ancestral roofs. No matter from what direction you approach Rancocas, you will at least slow down, not because the little signs at the borders tell you to but because of a certain mien the village has maintained. If you come along the old turnpike from Bridgeboro or Beverly way, you will remark the little brick house that was built for one of the schoolmasters; if you come from Mount Holly, dates and initials on old houses must make you wonder; if you go by way of the bridge across the creek, from Masonville through Centreton, you will see, as we did long before we began to pry into such matters, the Thomas Green house on the rise at the left, and at the right, further up, the Bernard Devonish, later the McIlvaine

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farm—plantation manors which have looked toward the water for two centuries or more. Farther away, on a hill, you will catch a glimpse of Stokingham.

Joseph Lundy, great-grandfather of Maurice Lundy who now lives in the village at the store corner, purchased the Green farm in 1810 and William Spohn Baker, the present owner, is a man who respects the past and so the old house is in good hands. The earlier McIlvain farm, built by a pioneer Hilyard, was destroyed by fire many years ago, but the present McIlvain homestead is old and lovely enough to recall the arrival of Bernard Devonish who, surveying the Rancocas after his arrival on the *Kent* in Burlington in 1677, is said to have declared: "This is the place I have seen in my dreams!" As for Stokingham, it goes back to Thomas Harding, who was surveying his new plantation in the 1680's and whose home served for early gatherings of the Rancocas Friends. When Harding died, his farm was purchased by John Stokes, the son of Thomas and Mary Barnard Stokes, also passengers on the *Kent*.

Members of the Stokes family call Elizabeth Green, bride of John Stokes, "Lady Green," and many would say her marriage to John was a rebound affair, for Elizabeth had been sent to New Jersey by her parents who were violently opposed to her marriage to a youth in England with whom she had fallen in love. Thomas Green, something of an aristocrat, sent to West Jersey with Dr. Daniel Wills as a sort of watchdog, both Elizabeth, his daughter, and her brother, John. They are supposed to have lived with the physician in Burlington until a house had been built on the Green plantation which adjoined the Wills farm.

George DeCou, in recalling the old legend—and if George is quoted too much it is because his painstaking accuracy is so evident—has declared that the Greens were as opposed to Elizabeth's second affair. This developed when "the gay Elizabeth" needed someone who would guide her along the unknown paths across her father's and near-by estates, someone who would be a super-servant in the care of her horses.

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John Stokes, "a dependable and trustworthy young Quaker," lived up the creek and took the job. In the companionship which followed, there was something more, for most of the formalities go riding off into space when the journey demands horses along woodsy paths and canoes in the gloaming along primeval streams. Whatever objections the Greens offered across the seas were withdrawn when inquiries were made, and Elizabeth's people were apparently satisfied.

The original Stokingham was wrecked in a fire "about 1800" and the present homestead, built by the grandson of John and Elizabeth and restored by *his* grandson, Israel, is the property of Royston D. Engle, a descendant. Not far away is an Indian spring, gushing with radiant water just as it did in the days of the Olives, Eves, Wills and Bortons, just as it did when it gained mention in deed after deed describing surveys and property transfers of the whole locality.

There are many who know the countryside and of these, some have told us that much at and near Rancocas is as it was, while others have said as solemnly, and with longer faces, that nearly all has changed. To be sure, only the foundation of the old school near Stokingham was evident half a century ago and that is gone now; certainly the old road that followed the creek and crossed the plantations bordering it has vanished, almost from memory, even; a picture of Franklin Park, as recently printed as 1929, would indicate that changes in the landscape around it have altered its own appearance. Passenger vessels have disappeared from the creek, Sea Scouts have a cabin near the site of the Indian town and, in the tennis court beyond the old school and Meeting House, players in shorts prove the coming of a new day.

For all that, and despite the changing of its name, Rancocas dips into the past, makes the most of its present and looks the future squarely in the eye.

Chapter 10

EBB TIDE AT BARNEGAT

"Now, when dark winter's icy breath
Brings solemn tales of wreck and death,
Whilst watching through the midnight dark
For homeward step and lantern's spark,
In fishing cabins old wives tell
Again the tale all know so well . . ."

—ETHEL LYNN BEERS

IF IT'S old names you're looking for, you must go down to Barnegat. For in spite of the changes that have come since days when cordwood was cut and shipped, when charcoal was burned close by the shore, the sons and grandsons and great-grandsons of the founders have lingered, whimsical in their contentment, matter-of-fact concerning heirlooms of history.

There are the Cranmers, not only in the village but all along the shore and inland, too; these are descendants of William Cranmer, an early settler on Long Island in 1640. There are the Ridgways—Timothy Ridgway married Sarah, William's daughter, in 1729. There are the Collinses—and it is noted that Ebenezer took license to wed Ann Woodmansee in 1748. And there are the Woodmansees themselves, the Rulons, Camburns, Birdsalls, Sopers, Rogerses and Spraggs. Many of them have forgotten the colorful importance of their forebears but many others make up for such lapses, if you but question them. What they'll tell you, then, will link Barnegat with the midlands, with the oldest days of Monmouth and, in days when famous folk bumped their elegance down the pinewoods trails for quiet week ends in the inns along the shore, with Joseph Bonaparte and Prince Murat.

Perhaps Barnegat has lost importance because the main road to the watering places on Long Beach leads to a bridge across the bay at Manahawkin, once Manahocking, an Indian name meaning "good corn land." After crossing the mysterious

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plains the highway now turns near the site of a fire tower at Cedar Bridge and so the old road to Barnegat is seldom burdened with heavy traffic any more. The shore road passes through the village but usually those who use it are on their way to Atlantic City or returning to New York, always in a hurry, with no thought for old houses, taverns turned houses for clam-diggers or the abandoned Hotel Barnegat of today. For an age of speed there is no tragedy in a railroad station with windows boarded up, posters concerning trains that would startle the town were they to arrive, even off-schedule, today. It may be that if you asked those who pass by they would locate Barnegat City, on the island, and not old Barnegat at all.

There's no denying it, much that was Barnegat of the stage-coach days and of times to follow, when cyclists used a cinder path from Freehold to "speed" down to the old hotels, has been put on a shelf and is fast gathering dust. Clarence Woodmansee won't admit that, nor will the Ridgways, Perrines, Sopers and many others. Still wandering down to the corner, settling the business of the world at the store, they now think of Barnegat and the country around it as Henry Hudson did after he cruised along the shore in the *Half Moon*. Henry said in his log: "It is a very good land to fall in with and a pleasant land to see."

But Barnegat folk have things to remember that will make the village important forever although they're shy of talking about them. What of it if there is a house down the road to the shore that they say was once an inn where Joseph Bonaparte signed the book? Why so much fuss over Prince Murat, King Joachim Napoleon, who succeeded Joseph as King of Naples? Why, Joachim should have been at home in a tavern at Barnegat! Wasn't he the son of an innkeeper at La Bastide-Fortuniere? Even if he *was* first aide-de-camp of the great Napoleon who proclaimed Joseph king, Barnegat honored the gentlemen with its hospitality just as much as they honored Barnegat at the end of a long stage ride, through the woods from Bordentown! Inns were inns then. Houses are houses now. And so, today, the old tavern . . .

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Wait! Barnegat folk have their own stories, memories of elegant yesterdays, vivid adventures, equaling those days of easily assumed titles and all the fancy furbelows of imported gentry. Wasn't it a Rulon, one of the ancestors of the family to be found in Barnegat, Waretown, Tuckerton and even Allentown, who was nailed up in a hogshead by his Catholic brethren so that he could escape the fury reserved for Huguenots in the late 1600's? And don't the Cranmers who are interested at all in the past say they are descendants of the family of Archbishop Cranmer, burned at the stake in 1556, or at least of Archdeacon Cranmer, whose kin were at Forked River and Cedar Creek in 1748? And aren't the Camburns—they're all along the Barnegat shore—linked with the Rulons by marriage and with the mystery that altered the good old Scotch name of Cameron?

Moreover the Spraggs were Spragues and came down from Rhode Island, for there is a record of James marrying Elizabeth Johnson in 1798 with Job Lippencott, namesake of Jobstown, presiding at the ceremony. The Sopers, also believed to have been Huguenots, came to Barnegat after the death of Richard Soaper, of Woodbridge in Middlesex County, in 1725, and although the name was continued with an "a" as late as the 1860's, many had been dropping it from their name somewhere along the road. If you pause in Barnegat long enough to turn about, you will meet a man making boats, a storekeeper, a wandering preacher or an old Coast Guardsman with names that make them one with the pioneers and events that recall a village surely less somnolent than that of today.

The first to visit Barnegat were Summer transients, Indians who left their towns in the midlands to make the most of clamming in the bay. "That's what I tell people who want to know about Indians along the shore," Clarence Woodmansee said. "I tell them they were just like people are now, coming down for a vacation." They dug their mollusks, baked them and stored them away for the Winter to come. In almost every area that was favored by the red-skinned natives, one or two lingered on after the others had gone, no matter what Andy Williams remembered about Indians no

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nearer than the Carolinas. Parson Woodmansee remembered that when he was a boy a place was pointed out near the Central Railroad turntable where the last wigwam had stood, and even as he did he produced a faded picture of what had been the Indian church at Indian Mills where he preached after the last New Jersey reservation there had been evacuated.

The first whites came to Barnegat about 1700, locating on uplands near the sea-meadows. The first house is said to have been the Collins farmstead, built about 1720. But many will point out that none of the first settlers of Barnegat tarried long except "Jonas Tow, who, it is said, died before he could get away." Perhaps there were mosquitoes even then!

Among the first permanent settlers were Levi Cranmer—they call it Crammer in Barnegat—Timothy Ridgeway, Stephen and Nathan Birdsall, Ebenezer Collins, the Conklins and the Rulons, who took up part of the Cranmer tract. Titles weren't taken over all at once, the first land being transferred from the proprietors to Cranmers and Ridgeways in 1759, embracing the plot where the Quaker Meeting House can be found on the winding road down to the bay shore where once it was the center of the village. The old meeting house, the third building erected for religious services in the county, has watched the years troop by as it has the trains of servants in the entourages of Prince Murat and Napoleon's brother, on their way to Eli Collins' inn, still in service as a dwelling. Shipbuilders, salt-makers, long queues of teams hauling cordwood went shoreward, too, but few are left to remember.

Speaking of names that continue as ties of everlasting friendship between the old world and the new, it is doubtful if that of Campbell can be bettered, for it leaps back and forth across the sea. When William Dockwra, the same who was to turn up as a landowner as far away as Millstone, came into possession of the site of Barnegat, the tracts of Lord Neil Campbell and Robert Burnett were next along the road to Waretown. In case you might forget—or doubt—the Lochiel Brook, singing absently through the meadows between Barnegat and Waretown, was named for Milord Neil's estate in

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Scotland. Archibald, who came over with Milord, returned to England and became Bishop of Scotland in 1711. Another Archibald, who shipped as a servant to John Dobie in 1684, remained.

It was a schoolboy essayist who got at the truth when he said that for all the sturdiness of stock in Barnegat, when the first settlers fought every kind of obstacle to build a town and make the now overgrown salt-water farms pay, "our ancestors did not cover themselves with much glory during the Revolution. The majority," he went on, "were Quakers opposed to fighting, while the remainder were either too busy sailing their sloops or making salt to take part to any great extent. Some, it is true, did fight in several skirmishes at Manahawkin and elsewhere." It is only fair to say that the writer forgot that Barnegat boasted a man who was an intimate of Washington and a soldier by his side long before the war for independence, Jonathan Edwards.

The Cranmers and Ridgeways were salt-makers. They were among those who sought out places in the salt-meadows where no grass would grow and, digging well, found the subsoil strongly impregnated. Water from those wells, as Edwin Salter and Parson Woodmansee have described it, the latter as he looked across the marsh to the site of a salt-plant, was placed in large boilers, with arched ovens underneath. After most of the water had been boiled away, what was left, thick with salt, was poured into baskets, sugarloaf in shape, from which the water drained. So often Salter is lost sight of in the mass of historical data he gathered and which was almost haphazardly thrown together after he died. Although Clarence Woodmansee said he had known most of those to whom Salter talked, the book made from the anecdotes recorded by this native of Morris County, a descendant of the Bownes, Lawrences and Hartshornes who was clerk in a bookstore, schoolmaster at Forked River, master of a coaster and later politician, is authoritative and now sufficiently rare to have become a collector's item. We saw his grave in Barnegat.

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As for Barnegat's history, Friends, early Protestants, Roman Catholics have had a part in it. There is a record that as early as 1745, Thomas Thompson, a representative of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, sought to plant an Episcopal Church there, an outpost of the Church of England. As late as 1872 another Episcopalian was holding services there once a month. In 1873 Bishop Odenheimer went to the Methodist Church to preach but that was the last appearance of Prayer Book services.

Presbyterians fared better. Beginning their meetings at the Rulon house in 1760, they have managed to keep services going most of the time since, although the present church was organized in 1876. The Methodists made out very well from the first, services having been held prior to the Revolution. The first organization came in 1829 with the Reverend Job Edwards as pastor. Parson Job, whom his descendants claim as kin to Abiah Edwards, the shipwright of Shrewsbury, was a remarkable man: he was often called upon to conduct a funeral, preach the sermon, sing the hymns and bury the dead in a coffin he himself had built, all in a day.

Roman Catholics organized St. Mary's Church in 1907 and although the members had no early church in Barnegat, their action at once linked them with the past of the village. The abandoned schoolhouse was purchased and, quickly remodeled, was consecrated as a church building.

In Revolutionary days, Barnegat-made ships were taking salt, cedar rails and pine wood to New York. The supply of wood began to fail at the end of the eighteenth century and the owners of coasting ships became uneasy, especially when rumors of the perfecting of the steamboat drifted down across the bay. However, for a time the steamboat gave a new lease on life and trade. Pine wood was needed for fuel by vessels going on longer journeys. Meanwhile, Barnegat folk had had time to think and when the wood supply failed altogether, perhaps a hundred years ago, they had turned their attention to charcoal which soon filled the forgotten landings where timber had been stacked.

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Then and subsequently, virtually every man in Barnegat followed the sea, as masters of coasting ships, as shippers of charcoal or as traders, sailing with freight to New York, New England, Virginia and Florida, the new hustle and bustle finding its peak during and shortly after the Civil War. Next to nothing of that could be concluded from anything to be seen in Barnegat now, with the wind haunting its largest hotel, rust caking the tracks of sidings near the deserted station with windows long boarded up.

Even the names of sloops and schooners, *Wren*, *Practical*, *Jersey Native*, *Euphemia Alice*, *Gazelle*, *Little Edward*, *Golden Rule*, *Elmira Rogers*, *Elizabeth Ann*, and *Bricksburg*, the latter the name of another forgotten town as well, now called Lakewood, have become almost mythical in less than a century and much of the romance of their trade has died away. Yet these were ships well known to Barnegat, as well established as are the names of others in the mind of Parson Woodmansee who saw many of them being built. These were the vessels that crowded the Manchester dock, that hurried before the wind to brickyards along the Hudson, sometimes to the original Hudson River Steamboat Company's store yards with fuel from the Forked River Mountains, returning home laden with whiskey, rum, brandy, gin and Lisbon wine that sold for fifty cents a gallon. Winter was a dreaded season along the shore and stores were laid in for the siege, grass hats for another Summer, fustians, towcloths and bombazettes, as well as provisions.

Four shillings was paid for a cutting of a cord of market wood. The price went up to twenty shillings in deliveries to the docks. Payments were made in veal, raccoon skins, and even, would you believe it, feathers. All that seems so dreadfully long ago when you think of it in the present mainland Barnegat, and yet it is not. Even in 1907 Barnegat was proud of its excelsior mill, a witch-hazel distillery, a glass factory, a bank and an opera house. The bank is still there, the opera house is a talkie with hand-drawn posters, but all the rest have gone. When Lakehurst was Manchester Furnace, Bayville

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was Potter's Creek, Cedar Creek had not succumbed to a fancier name, Lanoka. Out on Long Beach, Surf City was still called Mansion of Health, even before it became Culver or Long Beach City. Only Barnegat has persisted in being Barnegat, though the "heroic lay" may be tuneless now.

It has been said that at no point along the Atlantic coast have so many ships come to grief than off Barnegat, unless it be Monomoy, off Chatham, Cape Cod. Peahala, named for the Indian word for duck, was once strewn with the ribs of wrecks as was Loveladies, named for Thomas Lovelady, a Barnegat pioneer, and not the amorous inclinations of sailors as a native once convinced us. Those days of sailing ships and countless wrecks are recalled in a section of the graveyard which surrounds the Meeting House, one corner of which appears not to have been used, inasmuch as there are no tombstones there. It is probable that more have been buried here than where there are markers.

That fact was impressed on us when we were there one day by Cap'n Ed Ridgway, who lives just across the road from the structure built by the Friends for their services in 1767. Cap'n Ridgway nodded knowingly as we read him something about the Ridgways of long ago there in the Quaker graveyard—you won't do much snooping around there without the Cap'n coming to see what you're about or if he can help. There was a book like ours that told about the Ridgways "somewhere upstairs," he said, with a draw at his pipe, but he hadn't seen it for a long while and it was nice to get the old folks straightened out again.

"When I was a boy," he said, "and that wasn't yesterday, they used to say there was hundreds buried over there where there's no stones. When a ship was wrecked, there'd be bodies coming in all along the shore and the villagers would be busy for a day or two bringing them that was drowned up here to bury. Lots of 'em, they said, had on no clothes at all—just money-belts strapped around 'em. There was always stories that they had been robbed but you don't want to believe all that. Some they buried here and others they put down at Manahawkin."

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While there were many wrecks in his day, two he heard about seemed most graphic in his recollection. "It was before my time," he confided, "but I used to talk to the man who saved the one survivor of the two ships. One was the *Manhattan* and the other the *Powhatan*, one a-goin' out light and the other comin' in with full crew and passenger list. They sort of passed each other on the shoals just as the storm struck. They tried to get in—and couldn't. The beaches, they say, was covered with dead, with more comin' in all the time."

Cap'n Ed, his hands browned and his face ruddy from years of sun, said the man who found the lone survivor was a Perrine. "Uncle of the fellow who runs the boat shop. There was plenty of talk about Barnegat pirates in those days and this poor fellow must have had it in his head that he was in for it. He told Perrine he'd work for him as long as he lived, if he'd spare his life." Cap'n Ridgway said he never got the name of the survivor straight but heard that he went to live "over Burlington County, somewhere."

The Barnegat pirates really weren't pirates, said Cap'n Ed, as many others have done before him. They were wreckers, taking what they wanted now and then from ships stranded on shore and perhaps going so far as to watch a ship founder with something like anticipation. But Cap'n Ridgway said they didn't lure ships in like mooncussers.

"I can remember the *Summer* going aground—that was as recent as war-time. She was a transport. There was men and women aboard, for one of the women had a baby after she was brought ashore. Two or three fishermen had nerve enough to go aboard and gather up a thing or two and they were hauled up in Camden court in short order. They weren't doin' as much and they didn't get anything like what the ones they call pirates had done years before!"

Cap'n Ridgway saw the *Summer* out there on the shoals. One day when he was coming in, he said, the wreck of a Nova Scotia schooner had "slapped right up agin her." "There she was, as fair a prize as any, with plenty to be had that would go into the sea before anybody came by, and I couldn't touch her."

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Perhaps it was a matter of principle with Cap'n Ed, although there seemed to be a note of regret in his voice. The Captain is Joseph K. Ridgway's son and Joseph used to keep the Long Beach Club House as a tavern. That was when the bit of road that goes out to the docks and the houses in the marshes on the bay shore made up the center of the village. There were scattered houses along the road to Manahocking then and their architecture, simple lines, and windows of Jersey glass can be found in those along the road to Manahawkin today.

There was an inn further down below the graveyard but all of that is gone now, the Captain said. Not so the inn visited by Prince Murat and Joseph Bonaparte concerning which Clarence Woodmansee, "The Prophet of the Pines," as many continued to call him, saved the prize recollection. This is still standing, changed, of course, but bearing yet the marks of an ancient hostelry. Those who lived there when we were there revealed themselves as not the sort to live on tradition and subsist on the finery of the past, nor yet find exercise in the climbing of a family tree. They had erected a sign out front proclaiming the clams they displayed in a homemade stand "fresher and larger than any in this town."

Cap'n Ridgway recalled only the name of Martin V. Clayton in connection with the place when it was enjoying its last tavern delights. We recalled something of the Claytons for him, saying that John Clayton was up in Chesterfield, Burlington County, in 1702, and that he could be traced to early Rhode Island settlements and then to Dover, New Hampshire, in the 1650's. Cap'n Ed slapped a mosquito. "Guess that's right," he said, and went on to talk of the year's mosquito crop which, he proclaimed, with no need for proof, was bigger and better than ever. Then he switched to hickory trees, saying there used to be some big ones till the Quakers cut them down so the boys wouldn't scamper through the graveyard for nuts.

"Bother you, don't they?" inquired the Cap'n, attacking a new aerial squadron and making believe he offered no lure. "That's one thing about this place!"

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This was the first note of criticism although you could interpret it any way you chose. He shook his head. There's a great deal that has happened to Barnegat that will be blamed on mosquitoes and the mosquitoes will be blamed on land breezes. Though the land breezes may seem numerous, one can always retort that it has taken the insect attackers long enough to get anywhere with those who came determined to stay.

It is impossible to leave the wrecks of Barnegat without some reference to what is unquestionably one of the most tragic. The story is told up one street and down another today, gathering pathos all the way. The principals are a captain, master of a schooner, and his wife, who chose to be lashed to the mast of the stranded vessel and to entrust the safety of their baby to the mate who carried her to shore in the life-car. In the freezing cold of morning, when the dawn came, the parents were found frozen in each other's arms.

Perhaps the tale has gained fresh colors in the retelling of it. No better version can be found, however, than in the lines of a poem written by Ethel Lynn Beers, recited on many a Barnegat program with all the poignant contrast of fury and calm, sacrifice and heroism that we recall when "Anchored" was sung around the piano on a Sunday afternoon. The first stanzas tell of the family on shipboard, unaware of the fate that is haunting them. The mother is singing "Sweet By-and-By" and the sailors, devoted to the baby girl, are moved by her mother's thin treble. Then, continuing in dramatic fervor, the poet has written:

"Ere midnight passed or morning broke,
The little child or mother woke,
Came crash and cry—came falling spar.
The *Tolck* was stranded on the bar!
Hoarse voices shouted; swinging low
Great sails, ice-mailed, flapped to and fro;
White faces showed when through the night,
Shone rocket's flash and Coston-light,
And strong men shuddered as the sea
Broke o'er the stern relentlessly.
'Men, save yourselves!' the captain said.
'My place is here, alive or dead!'

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'Save wife and child!' Strong helpers drew
Mother and child the stairway through—
Lashed to the mast with tender care
The captain's wife, pale, calm and fair.
She wrapped her child in scarf and shawl,
Then whispered to the first mate tall,
'Save her for me, Ben. I will bide
Through peril at the captain's side . . .'

The rescue itself is described in similar vein. The storm increased its fury and the sea, more vicious than ever, prevented the use of any small boat. The mate was landed with his precious charge and the skipper and his wife clung together as they saw them reach the shore. In her final lines the author seems to indicate that perhaps there is at least one ghost story in Barnegat. Ghost stories that the natives will recall in public in the midlands seem few and far between. The poem concludes:

"Now, when dark winter's icy breath
Brings solemn tales of wreck and death . . ."

And then, finally, with just the right balance of mystery:

"Just when the drift-wood fire burns low,
And loitering neighbors turn to go,
They stop and listen by the door,
And hear, they say, though wild seas roar,
Clearly and softly, floating high,
That faith-song still, 'Sweet By-and-By.'"

No matter what romantic trimmings the story has added through the years, it is no fairy-tale. The child so rescued, we were told almost at once, even before the atmosphere established by the reciting of the poem had been dissipated, was living in Boston. Her name, they said, was Geneva Sawyer Milligan. We determined to find her and sought a more specific address, for Boston isn't Barnegat.

Barnegat knew the woman who perhaps is the only surviving character in that tempestuous drama of long ago, one of many in which the backdrop has been the same, the shoals of Barnegat, swept by the elements, now guarded by a light-

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ship where the famous lighthouses served and where, today, the last light stands, a monument to yesterday, a reminder for today. When Mrs. Milligan was carried ashore as a baby, she was cared for by the mother of William K. Hazleton, still a resident of Barnegat. Neither time nor the miles that lie between an historic Massachusetts city and a forgotten town in New Jersey can dim the bonds that began in the stormy dark before either knew.

One of the reasons we went back to Barnegat, apart from the sudden realization that the stage roads from the midlands reached down from the midlands long ago, was the revelation that Woodmansee was not yet extinct as a name, as we had inferred in a commentary on the almost abandoned station on the Central Railroad. There was a Woodmansee, descendant of the pioneers, we were told, very much alive in Barnegat. So, we met the Reverend Clarence Woodmansee, although meeting him was one thing and getting him to talk, another.

There was a curious coincidence in that, too, for in the letter that directed us to "the Prophet of the Pines" were details that made us think back to the depot beside the Blue Comet tracks, back to Burlington in the 1670's and beyond to Yorkshire whence those who landed in the Delaware River ice had come. We wrote to a Mr. A. Woodmancy, of Harrogate, Yorkshire, England, the similarity of whose name, spotted in an old amateur radio manual, challenged us. The Yorkshire Woodmancy replied that the Barnegat Woodmansee was probably connected for there had been an ancestor who had grown tired of whaling and presumably had "gone to the States."

The Barnegat Woodmansee wasn't as easily approached. Not that he was unfriendly—oh, no, far from that. It was just that he had been a busy man all his life and was busy as ever, even though he was eighty. A local preacher of the old school, his adventures had taken him to pulpits in lost villages of the pine country where today the churches, post offices and schools, to say nothing of those who used them, have disappeared. Several journeys were made to Barnegat with-

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out result for Parson Woodmansee was ever on call to take charge of an out-of-the-way funeral or some other service and, when at home, he had his real estate and vegetable patch to keep him busy. He wanted to remember the past but he was too occupied with the present. A sturdy, slightly stooped old man, with gnarled hand and kindly face in which weather-browned skin bore contrast to clear blue eyes, he invited, at last, the appearance of pencil and paper.

That night was memorable. Long after, when we thought of it, we could hear the whine of mosquitoes, greater in size and number because of weeks of rainy weather. "But you're a young fellow," said Parson Woodmansee, "and you oughtn't to mind a few mosquitoes!" With that he led the way on a tour that began in the old Masonic Cemetery. There, in contrast to heroes and pioneers buried in mounded gravel graves, the air was filled with creatures very much alive. Replies were monosyllabic—we were constantly occupied. Slaps became punctuation.

Nevertheless, the presence of both the quick and the dead was appropriate since Barnegat, like every town with a fading past, has a supply of both, in one form or another. Mr. Woodmansee did his share of slapping, too, but being more adept, hurled a dozen melodic drillers to oblivion at a blow. Nevertheless we concentrated on the fact that we were being shown the grave of Lieut. Jesse R. Soper in much the same way as we would have been shown all the sights crowded into that evening if Mr. Salter had been alive for Parson Woodmansee had been there so long that he had known the sources of the history as well if not better than Edwin himself.

Mr. Woodmansee numbered Sopers among his ancestors. "This Jesse," he said, "just had to be in the army, he liked it so well. I remember him here as a boy. That was before they shipped him off to fight in the Philippines. His leg was amputated there and reamputated in California. He died, after that."

Jesse Soper, whose stone bears a saber design at the top with the date, May 30, 1900, below, is the first of several

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notable heroes commemorated along the cemetery path. Next, there's S. Furman Perrine, who with Solomon and John Soper, died Feb. 11, 1886. Furman was thirty-five at the time and one of the Life Savers whose day preceded that of the Coast Guard. "They were drowned trying to rescue the crew of the bark, *Kraljevica*," said Mr. Woodmansee, "and it was a shame, too. For when they got to the ship, she had been abandoned and the crew was safe."

Of course, none of this was ancient history. But our guide was merely leading up to the climax. We had come to a formidable stone marking what seemed to be the resting place of Captain James Edwards, "patriot, soldier and Christian," who served as a soldier under General Braddock and George Washington in the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars. Captain Edwards was wounded at Fort Duquesne and is honored as "one of the founders of Methodism in this section of the State." The monument, the inscription brought out, was erected by the Captain's great-granddaughter, Susannah Edwards Mills.

"The only thing," put in Mr. Woodmansee, "he's not buried here. They say his grave's down Manahawkin way somewhere."

There are many Edwardses still along the shore and the Woodmansees are related to them, too. "One thing about the Woodmansees," said the old preacher later on, "they're in nearly all the States by this time and not one's a tavern-keeper or a criminal."

In the same Edwards enclosure is the grave of the Reverend Job, his grandson, the undertaker-parson. Not far away is a broken shaft marking that of George W. Salter, son of Edwin and Margaret, who died in a naval hospital in Rio in 1880. Mr. Woodmansee declared the broken shaft did not denote a life ended at an early age as far as Barnegat is concerned, but that the body hadn't been brought home. "Last time I saw George," he said, as if it had been a week before, "he was standing on the corner, talking to his father."

Then he took us down to Uncle Eli's, or the Collins house

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of today that was Uncle Eli's inn. "One day Prince Murat came down all of a puff and said he had to see Joseph Bonaparte right away," the minister recalled. "Uncle Eli said he couldn't take him over to the island, where Joseph was, for the water was too rough. The Prince, unruffled in his finery, even by the stiff gale that was blowing, said he had to see Joseph, that was all. So Uncle Eli finally got out an old fruit boat and started the trip across the bay. When they got out to the mouth of the Gunning River, the boat began to ship water. Uncle Eli told Prince Murat he'd have to bail. The Prince said nothing, just sat there. 'Guess you didn't hear me on 'count of the wind,' old Eli shouted at him. Murat merely stared across the bay. 'If you don't bail we'll sink, sure!' Collins yelled. 'We'll sink, then,' the Prince replied, 'and I'll swim ashore!' Bailing was obviously beneath his dignity. I never heard if he got to see Joseph Bonaparte or not."

There's another good Barnegat story about the old inn. "Everybody knew the place," Mr. Woodmansee said, "just as well as they knew this particular hanger-on who was always there. It was a sort of fetch-up place for a lot of 'em, I guess. Proctor was this fellow's name—and that's all we know for sure. One day an elegant coach drove up, perhaps as fancy as the one Joseph Bonaparte arrived in, and Proctor looked up as he took hold of the bit-straps and called the naval officer, probably an Englishman, by name. The officer stared at anyone so familiar so far from home. 'Don't you know me?' asked Proctor. 'Yes, Proctor, I know you,' said the newcomer, after a moment. 'I didn't recognize you in such clothes.' 'You ought to recognize me,' said Proctor. 'I hope you haven't forgotten that I stood as your second in that duel when we were on a cruise together.'"

Some time later Proctor was found dead and was buried by the town. Some, who remembered the incident of the inn and who realized he must have been more important once upon a time, decided that a grave in a potter's field was hardly fitting. They dug up the body, provided a new coffin and reburied Proctor in the cemetery further up the road. Then they took

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the old coffin, Parson Woodmansee said, and propped it up against the door of the home of the overseer so that when he opened up in the morning, it crashed in upon him, attesting the displeasure of true patriots.

Mr. Woodmansee directed us to School Street, which once was a mere lane leading to the school, now the boat works. The older school, he said, was actually in the middle of the road and has vanished altogether. Further down what was the lane was the original site of the old Free Church. It's a vacant lot, now, but, the preacher said, there are unmarked graves of drowned sailors and castaways back there yet. Perhaps that is why no extensive digging for new building has been begun. "The Methodists ran the church mostly," Parson Woodmansee said, "with Job Edwards doing a lot of the preaching."

The oldest house was pointed out as the one occupied by George Griffin when we were there. When the carpenters were fixing it up, they were struck by the evidence of age and came to Mr. Woodmansee for an authentic date. "I couldn't tell them positively," he said, in recalling it, "but I always heard it was the Timothy Ridgeway house and that Levi Cranmer had lived there. There was another old house over there opposite where the bungalow is, when I was a boy.

"You see, the business section was 'way down here in the old days. This was the old carter Road, we used to call it, and this other was the main road to the shore. The old road to Manahawkin ran down here close by the bay."

Here Mr. Woodmansee surprised us, as he did many times, by pulling a whole sheaf of drawings from a deep pocket. He had painstakingly drawn the old houses of Barnegat from memory, the old Cranmer house, the old Daniel Conkling house, the first school and many others as he remembered them from many years ago. His sketch of the church called for the added explanation that there was a three-sided gallery. The Camburn house, he pointed out, was built to house two families most of the time in later years. The Conklings may have added the "g" in after-years, Mr. Woodmansee said,

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although even now there's a variance. Stephen and John probably descended from another John Conklin who was at Gravesend, Long Island, in 1656.

A mistake that would be natural enough in Barnegat would be your conclusion that the empty places along the Barnegat roadsides were always empty. Once upon a time, they grew up. Later on, they grew down. Down the flats along Double Creek were scores of docks with cordwood piled high. Along the trail to the shore were stacks of pine in eight-foot lengths. Lines of teams stretching half a mile came out of the woods at sundown.

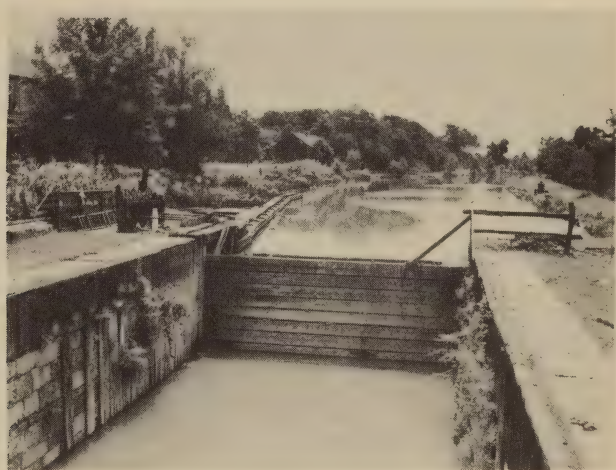
"Over there," said our guide, when he had taken us to the public parking ground where there is a wooden landing from which visitors try for crabs in the thoroughfare, "was a saltworks. See that clump of bushes with the old weather-beaten tree in the middle. That was it. There's nothing but stones to show for it now—and you have to dig down for them."

Clarence Woodmansee knew all those things, not from hearsay. He had inherited them with the traditions of the family, pioneers who had been on the very land upon which we stood, in earliest times. The Woodmansees took all of it over, inshore from Conlin's Island, from the six-hundred-acre tract of Burnett of 1690 and a later Murdoch transfer. Then Joseph Soper, the parson's mother's great-greatgrandfather, came into possession. Woodmansees go back, you might say, to the Lord Neil Campbell days.

There were farms here, down by the shore. All this land was tilled and yielded well. Barnegat was self-supporting, self-sufficient then. There was the tannery up Gunning River. And over that way, further, they used to make molasses from the sugar cane they raised. Over the bridge where you will see the marshes, sailing ships were built, hundreds of them, to sail the Seven Seas. "I can remember them building the *L. H. Hopkins*, the *Angelina Predmore*, the *Ella Robinson* and the *Hannah Predmore*," the preacher said. "I think the *Lloyd B. Robinson* was the last they built down here. I've



Nobody cares about the rusting wheels and abandoned machinery of the watergates of the old D. & R. except the old lock-tenders who hope the canal will come back. Aaron Slover often sits here at Griggstown, thinking he hears the bells of the mules again.



Each lock had its own importance and today each has its memories. Here's the one at Kingston, once Kingstown, better known because a principal road passes just beyond.



Restoration of the Berrien mansion at Rocky Hill by the State was a thorough, thoughtful business. This was the front of the house when Washington was there and from the balcony of the room in which it had been written, the Farewell Address was read to the Commander's staff for the first time.



The bridges over Stony Brook recall days of rattling coaches, clatter of musketry, the fatal wounding of General Mercer. This one, despite the floods and freshets that often fill the meadows, will stand for generations more.

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got all the flats staked off with concrete markers now. All this land is ours. Some day a fine concrete road will come down here to the shore. Then the land on that side of the road is going to be as high as it is over here when all the fill is in."

Then Mr. Woodmansee turned to do his share of exploding the Barnegat Pirates myth. "There was plenty of privateering," he said, "but that was all . . . the British came up the inlet and set fire to ships, sometimes slaughtering cattle here in the War of 1812. But pirates? Certainly not! Grandfather Woodmansee had a funny experience along that line, if you're interested. He was out on the bay one day when he spied a man-o-war bearing down on him. The wind died down and he couldn't get in in time. The captain of the British ship took him aboard.

"After that was done, he didn't know quite what to do with Grandfather. 'I've really got no authority to destroy property now,' said the commander of the ship. 'I will have when the next ship arrives but I haven't got it yet. Guess the best thing I can do is put you back on your boat!' Which, with all the politeness of war-time in those days, he did."

Much of the libel about pirates at Barnegat was built up on the stage in Europe, we were told. "I can remember once when a foreign brig was wrecked on the beach out there, the captain came up to the house armed to the teeth. When he saw no sign of hostilities, he said he might as well put his weapons away. 'I don't know what they mean by those pirate stories,' he said. 'I don't know as I've ever been used better. I'm going back and tell them how wrong they are.' When it came to paying the bill for hospitality, the captain said it was too low. He insisted on adding another seventy-five dollars.

"Yes," the parson went on, after we had come back to the shore road and he had showed us the place where he had always heard the last wigwam stood, "the Barnegat of old has gone. Sailors? When I was a boy I used to travel to all parts of the world listening to their stories down here on the shore.

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Barnegat men traveled to every part of the world in those days.

"Remember the pirate ship they were showing down in Atlantic City not long ago? Did you know it was a fake? Why, that was the *Lydia Middleton*, built right here in Barnegat. One day a party from here went aboard and listened to the lecture, all about the bloody scrapes the pirate ship had weathered in her time. One of the visitors stepped up. 'Ain't you a little mistaken?' he asked. 'Why, I sailed that ship for years, Mister. She was built right upshore here in Barnegat.' That was a good one, eh?"

We left Parson Woodmansee in time to allow him to go to Prayer Meeting, after he had shown us his father's arithmetic book and an old Book of Psalms, inscribed by John Conklin in 1772, Stephen Conklin in 1787, and then Mrs. Deziah, James and Clarence Woodmansee. We asked, finally, how the family name had been given to the station so far inland. "When we kept store up there around the corner," said the old preacher, "we tried to pin Anthony Morris down to that one night. He said he thought his uncle named it for his Aunt Hannah, although he wasn't quite sure.

"Got all that straight now? Don't color it none, will you? For if you do, I'm afraid, as the fellow says, that I'll be inclined to contradict you!"

The name itself continues to preserve the significance of Soper's Landing on the bay shore. Near here was where the first farmhouses served as grandstand seats as those who lived near by climbed up to see early lifesavers rescue unfortunates trapped in vessels "wrecked" upon the shoals, or, in war-time, to witness British and American sloops in contests to capture crews and cargoes. However, although there is a rich background in the name, Perrine, there is nothing to show that Perrine's boat shop was once a schoolhouse and that the Free Church stood up the lane. The church, begun in 1829, and torn down later for schoolhouse lumber, found virtually every resident in and around Barnegat contributors—Sopers, Rulons, Birdsalls, Chamberlains, Oliphants, Parkers, Ridg-

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ways and dozens more. The Reverend Job was on the committee appointed to "build as soon as possible" the church that was sometimes called "the Missionary Meeting House."

Barnegat seems to have been slow in acceding to the program of public instruction and not until 1867 was there a public school. The well-to-do sent their children to New England and Pennsylvania boarding schools. There were "pay schools" of course but, even so, only 135 children attended them in the village in 1843. Many received no instruction whatsoever, outside the home or church, for there were 571 on the tax list in 1837. When Edwin Salter was teaching his private school in 1850, his bill to Mr. Selah Oliphant for two children's tuition for sixty-nine days at three cents a day, plus twenty cents for fuel, was \$2.27. From this was deducted twenty-eight cents "free money" and \$1.89 was the balance due Mr. Salter, the old receipt shows. So it wasn't the cost of teaching that kept Barnegat children at home although no one will blame the schoolmaster for taking to a coaster and politics.

There was "a private select school" at Barnegat for years. It had "a distinguished teacher by the name of Hyde. He was a scholar and a strict disciplinarian," according to Henry W. Sterner's account. This was the school that became the Roman Catholic Chapel. So, in a boat shop in one part of town and in a church in another, one can trace at least a part of Barnegat's educational progress.

It was one of the Ridgeways who started the mink farm—George, who in 1896 was said to have "the best pair of dogs for mink hunting in the county." Writing in a near-by weekly newspaper in 1896, C. H. Russell said "they will trail the mink to his burrow . . . or along the bank of the creek and dig him out. Mr. Ridgway stands by with a net and at the right time throws it over the mink, putting it in a sack and so carries it home." In the account of the establishment which even now is forgotten by many, it was said that "the animals remain hiding away in their beds throughout the day but at night they venture out and can be seen running around their

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pen." When the matter was reported, the fur, "which is only saleable in the winter season, has not been bringing as high a price as it did a few years ago." Many will deny the existence of minks in the marshes, let alone the Barnegat Mink Farm.

William Ridgway was one of many who were proprietors of an oyster saloon that once occupied the basement of what was the headquarters of the New Jersey Power & Light Company when we were there. Holmes Russell, Charles Reeves, Vincent Inman, Joseph Sonders, the Collinses, George Pitman, Thomas Gilbert and Ridgway were successive proprietors of the establishment, fading from recollection despite its name, "The Diving Bell."

Down the shore road toward Manahawkin is a clearing known through the years as "the Black John Lot." This, and a little grave in the old cemetery next to Perrine's boat shop, are all that recall the Barnegat of slave-hunting days. In 1830 a fugitive slave from Maryland was smuggled to Philadelphia and walked across New Jersey, with his wife and child. The family lived near Barnegat for several years until the report came that men were in the neighborhood, looking for Black John. He disappeared. Perhaps his wife stayed on, although that is uncertain. The baby died and was buried by the town. An old well in the clearing and the odd name have few to tell their meaning, unless it's the Collinses.

Further to the north in Monmouth County, there are many legends concerning Captain Kidd. Barnegat has its own, to which even the *Atlas of the New Jersey Coast* gives credence. On the road to Manahawkin, a strip of land known as Bennett's Neck is said to have been called for a man who came to live there under an assumed name. Solomon Burr, who once lived on the neck, declared that the so-called Bennett, an Englishman, had been bound out to a seafaring man as a youth and that the sailor, who subsequently joined Captain Kidd, compelled his apprentice to go along. When Kidd was captured, taken to England and tried, many of his associates were executed but the apprentice was cleared. Determined to lead a new life where he wasn't known, and more probably seeking a hiding place from those who might have exacted his

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life as a pentalty for testimony, "Bennett" came to America and wandered down Barnegat way. On the land that still continues to recall him to those who have heard the story, he built a little house and, keeping mostly to himself, lived the rest of his days without incident.

The *Atlas* backs up the account, too, for it points out that when Captain Kidd was tried at the Old Bailey, London, in 1701, with ten of his men, all were found guilty but three. These were Robert Lumley, William Jenkins and Richard Barlicorn, who produced their indentures to show that they were apprentices to the ship's officers. It is better than a guess that one of these changed his name to Bennett, for another Bennett, more or less, would go unmarked among others in the neighborhood, from Middletown to Forked River and beyond.

Much has been written concerning the Long Beach Massacre but in spite of that, few of the natives will tell you much about it. Perhaps it is because they don't know, perhaps because they are none too sure of the part Barnegat folk played in the bloody affair. Don't be disappointed if, when you inquire about it, you are referred to the few revelations made at the roadside near Manahawkin by a marker of the Historic Sites Commission.

It was on October 25, 1782, when a cutter from Ostend, bound for St. Thomas, grounded on Barnegat Shoals. Discovered there by an American privateering galley, the *Alligator*, a company led by Captain Steelman, of Cape May, started unloading the cutter's cargo. Indications are that residents of Barnegat and vicinity joined the raid, for Reuben Soper, of Soper's Landing, was killed on the beach near Barnegat Inlet by John Bacon, the refugee who was later hunted down and slain. The wreckers had unloaded quantities of teak and valuables and had camped for the night on the beach. All were asleep after a hard day's work when Bacon and his band landed, surrounded the camp and opened fire.

Bacon was killed early in 1783, according to the version told in Barnegat, at a tavern kept by William Rose, between Westecunk, later West Creek, and Clamtown, now Tucker-

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ton. So Bacon's demise is often recounted as having been accomplished at Egg Harbor. This followed a skirmish at Cedar Bridge in which Bacon had escaped, wounded. There was a William Cook killed in the scuffle at Cedar Bridge and so it is significant that Captain H. Joel Cook, a militiaman, was in the party that dealt justice at the tavern. Accounts which give Cornet Cook the credit should be supplemented to say that Cornet was a military rank and not an odd first name or mark of musicianship.

Gone in Barnegat are the days of the wandering chimney sweep and his cry of "Sweep-o!" Gone are the May Day parties held the first day of May each year, the planting and raising of sugar cane and broomcorn, beach parties like the one we heard about at Squire Tilton's, "prolonged a whole week through." No one makes his own tallow candles any more, no one uses the threshing-machine that once was taken from farm to farm. No one watches cattle being driven to the meadows on the first day of Spring.

The burning of great limekilns in Springtime by salt-water farmers of Barnegat is a thing of the past and the hundreds of bushels of shells once used for lime now go to the bottom of the bay for the nurture of young oysters in the beds marked by the stakes offshore. In Union Township where once there was so much sheep-raising, it is probable that years upon years have passed since the last were seen. Pigeon-shooting that made the Winter hurry by, horse-racing once so popular in the village with two or three meetings a week, quantities of black mussels that lined the channels and were used for fertilizer by farmers along the bay—all have vanished like the passing of a breeze on the surface of the inlet.

The names remain, names of folk who have withstood the test of time, names that have held on as unchanged as the sturdy pioneers who first bore them to Barnegat. A few of the names have been altered, of course, as the personalities bearing them through generations in and near the town have adjusted themselves to new conditions and the changing scene. We went away a little sad, wondering if Barnegat can do that, or if the world has passed it by.

Chapter 11

LOCKED WITH THE PAST: ALONG THE OLD D. & R.

"Those suns are set. Oh rise some other such!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new."

—WILLIAM COWPER: 1731-1800

WE NEVER expected to buy a new pair of pants in Kingston. Pants, certainly, would have little in common with all we had known, or heard, of the ancient villages along the forgotten Delaware and Raritan Canal. Trousers? Well, possibly. Pantaloons? More likely. Even breeches might have been a probability if we had thought about it. But pants! Surely not!

And yet, because there was a fence to climb by the Stony Brook below Princeton, not far from the Princeton battlefield, pants were a necessary acquisition before we could proceed with our expedition along the old canal—beyond Kingston. Then, pants or no pants, what we saw and what we thought of at Rocky Hill kept us lingering so long that we had to come again—and again.

With all the talk of a new canal, the restoration of a waterway across New Jersey, a journey in the back country and along old roads beside the Millstone River and the forsaken canal beside it, had renewed its challenge. For on Mr. Finley's hand-colored map of 1834 two red lines were drawn, indicating the old D. & R. from New Brunswick up through Raritan Landing, around to Weston and then down through Millstone, Blackwells, Griggstown and Kingston, as well as the "feeder" along the Delaware from Bull's Island to Bordentown.

The ancient description of Kingston had been more than arresting in the old *Gazetteer*. "On the line separating South

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Brunswick t-ship, Middlesex co., from Franklin t-ship, Somerset co.," Thomas Gordon found that "part of the town lies in each county, and half way between Philadelphia and New York. There are here," he went on, "a Presbyterian Church, an academy, 3 taverns, 4 stores, a large grist mill, saw mill, and woollen factory, driven by the Millstone river, which runs through the town." Then:

"The Delaware and Raritan canal also passes through it, with a lock at this place. There are here also, about 40 dwellings."

After a description of the soil, its "high state of cultivation" and its value, "at \$60 the acre," the historian of more than a century ago recorded a past that seemingly had begun to fade. "This place was once remarkable," he said, "for the number of stages which passed through it, for New York and Philadelphia, the passengers in which commonly dined at the hotel of Mr. P. Withington."

Then is added something significant, for it had to do with the failure of the canal, officially closed after 100 years of activity. "Before the completion of the Bordentown and Amboy rail road," says the paragraph, "49 stages, loaded with passengers, between the two cities, have halted here at the same time; when more than 400 harnessed horses were seen standing in front of the inn." Perhaps the departed Mr. Withington would have been amazed at the scene as we found it, for the chronicler pictures him as a resourceful man who "has lately made a very large fish pond on his lands, well stocked with trout, and other fish of the country, with which he can, at any time, supply his table in a few minutes."

And yet, with mention of stages, horses, trout, taverns, mills and all the rest, nothing rhymes with the pants we were compelled to buy in Kingston. And even if any of the four stores that were listed were still operating, we are almost certain that no such adornments of the limb could have been purchased there. For, as we write, it is a question whether those pants shall be worn again. The emergency of the moment is past and, after all, what may be left of dignity must suffer

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if color and design indicate the proximity of a masquerade.

It isn't fair, anyway, to blame Kingston, the Kingston of today, altogether. After all, it supplied the cure and not the cause. The cause was the fence not far from a hamlet once pointed out as Mapletown. We wanted to see the bridge again for, in contrast with much that had gone before and much more that was to follow, the three-arched span across Stony Brook proclaimed its permanence, boasted its longevity. So, in order to recall the lost details of a cracked and faded canvas, creaking stages lurching across in pre-Revolutionary days, shouts of the driver, chatter of gay-garbed travelers and perhaps a bewigged fisherman with buckled shoes and knickerbockers—aha! pants again!—we followed the photographer into the meadow.

The man with the camera had longer legs and that was something we had forgotten. Thus the fatal hesitation in mid-air and the disturbing rip as we plunged. Then, although the day was warm, the breeze came through where none had come before, and Sunday best that the cleaner had but recently creased, had come to utter ruin. The peace and beauty of the place were eloquent but modesty forgot them and refused to proceed beyond the establishment of a certain Jewish gentleman named Feldman beside the abandoned canal—at Kingston.

It may be that recollective thoughts are different or that Kingston pants are lucky, for after they had been donned behind the counter of the store across the road from what remained of one of the ancient taverns, with the obliging Mr. Feldman swallowing his surprise at such a Sunday sale and guarding the door, we pushed on through the countryside of Somerset, drenched with legend and tradition as with summer rain. Here, as we paused to see the canal lock, with its cumbersome gates and rusting machinery, the lock-tender's cabin and house across the stone-lined cut from which three young fishers were pulling bass and perch atop a painted inscription, "No Fishing in the Canal," we tried to recall the bustle and trade of yesterday.

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For there was a time when the Delaware and Raritan was "the greatest inland avenue of water traffic in the United States." In its best years "there was an unending procession of barges moving along its length from Bordentown to New Brunswick. Night and day, gate tenders were on the job; the locks were always full and mules and horses pulling barges were whipped until they dropped in their tracks."

It was back in 1800 that dreams of a water highway between New York and Philadelphia were being sketched on paper and loudly proclaimed by far-seeing progressives who were looked upon by many as the crack-pots of their time. Although four years after, a charter was given the New Jersey Navigation Company for working out a specific plan, few took the project seriously and it was not until 1823 that a survey was ordered by the Legislature. Even then the dreamers were dying or giving up hope, for delays piled up until 1830, when an act approving construction of a canal was finally passed. Once again a sinister note crept in, although it wasn't recognized, for while the canal was being approved, the Camden and Amboy Railroad, later the Pennsylvania, gained a charter of its own.

Even today it seems odd that the backers of the canal had to argue so much, that they had to be frustrated for so long, as history is repeating itself in similar arguments and tedious surveys. Now it seems wicked that so much planning, so much construction, so much of an obviously successful artery should have been permitted to die. But the explanation is simple: Those with money in the canal had more invested in the railroad and the development of one had to be checked to save the other.

But in the days of activity, with barges saving almost two hundred miles and skirting the dangerous Barnegat shoals altogether, the D. & R. was looked upon as superior in every way to the Erie Canal. The days of its opening were gay enough. In June of 1834, the work had been completed, back of Princeton, up along the Millstone to the turn below Bound Brook. Governor Peter Vroom and his aides, and also canal

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officials who were as much surprised by the project's completion as they were to be later on by its success, borrowed barges from the Delaware & Chesapeake and "were towed to Lambertville for a banquet." From all accounts, the festivities were much as they would be today, much as they will be if the canal is reopened.

Hotels and homes of political and civic leaders in Lambertville and vicinity were crowded the night of the big dinner, for the real journey wasn't to be until the next day. Then the barges, decked in bunting, and the Governor's party, in colorful dress of the day, began the trip up from Bordentown, delegations of men and women cheering and shouting a welcome from each lock rim, bridge and landing. New Brunswick provided the suitable climax with a salute of twenty-four guns, a speech by the mayor, a parade, and another banquet.

Years came that proved the wisdom of the dreamers. In tonnage of freight, the D. & R. broke records of the Erie. Increased business, despite the ban on passenger service, demanded constant improvement, even enlargement. By 1846 there were six hundred boats at work and speed became a necessity, encouraged by prizes. Such awards were quickly dropped when rivalry threatened feuds and property damage. The peak came in 1859, from all accounts, when 1400 boats were plying up and down the cut, most of them capable of carrying close to two hundred tons.

It may have taken backers of the canal a long time to convince officials of its value but the work was accomplished in an incredibly short time, realizing what equipment was in use. Canvass White, recalled as one of the great American engineers of all time, drew the plans. Irish immigrants scrambled in for the rough pick-and-shovel work—and it was rough, for all through the area are glacial boulders. Many of the stones were used in lining the canal but many others were so big that hours on end were required for moving them. One boulder, rolled from the canal's path, is a marker on the site of the Battle of Bound Brook, April 13, 1777.

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Hard times came, and yet nature herself was as active an enemy as the selfish investors who couldn't make up their mind whether they wanted earnings of the canal or greater returns on railroad stock. Profits were cut by the enlargement program of 1846. In 1850 two severe storms did much damage. When miners went on strike in 1869, coal shipments were snagged, and on them the canal depended a great deal. Then, as the strike was called off, a drought came and the barges, loaded, touched bottom. As the last straw, a flood caught grounded shippers unawares.

The management leased the canal, perhaps in desperation, perhaps for convenience, to the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroad, on a long-term agreement. When the Pennsylvania took over the Camden & Amboy, that ended coal on the canal—it went faster and at better profit on the railroad. In spite of every inroad, the D. & L. was “still doing a fair amount of business” in 1899 although new bridges permitted here and there presented new dangers to navigation. At the last, only a yacht or two were taking the short-cut to the sea.

“No longer,” says an account in the *Somerset Messenger-Gazette*, “did women and children gather at every drawbridge to watch the barges go by. The tinkle of mule bells and the sound of the boatman's horn as he signaled the bridge tenders to open faded away. The once bustling canal stands today a tree-bordered corridor of placid and reflecting water, memory to the past and monument to pioneer enterprise.”

Our chief concern, however, was not the canal, but the old towns beside it or not far removed, the villages boomed by prosperous days and dropped into forgetfulness by a changing world, hurrying away to new and brighter dreams, preferring speed on highways built for it to towpaths trod by pioneers with nothing more to sell.

Recalling these colorful events and as many more, we traveled the old, worn road along the canal with reverence and anticipation on that first of several journeys. It will not be possible to assimilate all the frayed importance of tempestuous times in a hurried trip. One must accede to the in-

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vation of a rocky weed-grown trail that leads to the quarries of the Kingston Trap Rock Company where, in the adjacent canal, there are sunken barges; one has to ignore the uncertainties of trails that have turned the too wary homeward, poke in every hidden corner, plunge through the screen of trees and underbrush, time and again. To follow the canal from Rocky Hill, the town, to Griggstown, a trail that winds obscurely behind the closed railroad station beyond the narrow lift-bridge that hasn't been up in years, may seem a tedious business to those who fear the unexpected.

The turn to the left on the road that comes over through Hopewell and goes on to New Brunswick will take you to the village, but before that the charm of Rockingham will test its hold. Rockingham is the grand old house where General Washington wrote the famous Farewell Address and then read it to his assembled staff from the balcony on what at first may seem to be the back, but in reality is the front. While it is obvious that if George slept in as many houses as they say, he must have suffered from sleeping sickness or a passion for providing landmarks for posterity, there's no doubt at all that he was at Rockingham from August 24, 1783, until November 10, that same year, with Congress leasing the place for his stay, and with the widow of Judge John Berrien as his "unofficial" hostess.

The road that passes what was the back of the house is comparatively new. When Judge Berrien looked from the portico there were no trees along the little boulder-studded brook and, instead, a long avenue of trees led from the ford across the Millstone. If the traveler has any imagination at all, he will listen absently to the caretaker's talk, realizing that here is a shrine in a sense the world may not understand, and with the realization will come the clatter of coaches, the shouts of servants unloading baggage, the tonic of common-sense talk and the contrast of colorful garb. Perhaps all that came more readily because we discovered that our arrival was a hundred and fifty-five years after Washington's, to the day. Perhaps the past returned the more vividly because we

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reflected how much more the Farewell would have meant to us, could mean to many, if only someone would say, "Let's go and see Rockingham, where it was written, and where it was first spoken."

They place the date of Rockingham at 1764 but that is only because the numerals were on a fireback there. It is just as likely that the house was built long before that. A house was marked John Berrien's, east of the Millstone, on John Dalley's map of 1745. John's grandfather was Jansen Berrien, a Huguenot and native of Berrien in the Department of Finisterre, fugitive to Holland and America, who turned up in Flatbush in 1669 and later in Newtown, Long Island, in 1685. Jansen married Jannetje Stryker, daughter of Jan, Flatbush pioneer, and, after Jansen died, Jannetje became the bride of the widower, Samuel Edsall. You may not care a hoot for such twigs and branchlets of family trees, but if you realize that the hostess of the Washingtons, who was trying to sell Rockingham and pleased beyond measure to have such a distinguished company on lease, was the widow of Judge John Berrien, one of the seven children of Peter, who married his stepsister, Elizabeth, in 1706; that Peter was a surveyor and a scholar; and that John was a Somerset taxpayer as early as 1735, you will begin to feel the welcoming of kindly ghosts all about you.

The Judge died before the Revolution and was buried in Princeton's cemetery as becoming a university trustee and Supreme Court Justice of the State. The pleasant surroundings of Rockingham may have been in marked contrast, we thought, to all that was in Washington's mind, but undoubtedly the old house provided a place apart, inscribed on the parchment of the Farewell, "Rocky Hill, near Princeton, November 2, 1783." Widow Berrien lived long beyond the time of those who came there, for her death was not recorded until 1819 when she was ninety-five.

Rockingham itself remained in the family until 1802 when it was purchased by Frederick Cruser, of the Crusers for whom a brook is named not far away. In 1830 it was sold to

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David H. Mount. In 1872 it went to Martin Howell, whose executors all but lost it forever. They leased it to the Rocky Hill Quarry Company who quartered laborers there until rescue came, as late as 1897, when the Washington's Rocky Hill Headquarters Association came into being.

It is extraordinary that so many people picture Washington as a sort of lone wolf, or a soldier who liked to be away from home, writing letters to his wife saying what a nice place Congress had found for him and wishing she were there. Mrs. Washington *was* there—and when she returned to Mount Vernon, George was definitely homesick, in spite of all Rockingham's charm. And while she was there, recovering from fever that followed a campaign in days when wars, as bloody as they were, still allowed for polite conduct and social elegance, the old house became a mecca for every variety of entertainment.

So many things, if they did not begin at Rockingham, could certainly have flowered there, and it was nice to consider them all before we went inside. We had been reading a miscellany of anecdotes from Somerset, culled from the columns of the *Messenger-Gazette* over a period of years and these were sufficiently fragmentary to demand filling in on the scene. Rocky Hill, it seemed as we stood there, must have been chosen as a more than important bower of reflection where Washington could allow his memories to drift down the road where exultant Colonials pursued retreating Redcoats along the Millstone to Kingston, over the ridge to the hard days at Pluckemin, or in another direction to the Arnold Tavern, the headquarters in Morristown when smallpox was dropping hundreds of the valiant in the January snow. Memories were more pleasant when they came to rest on the John Wallace house in Somerville, where the New York campaign against the Indians was planned, with Lord Stirling coming over from the Van Horne house in Bound Brook, General Knox from Pluckemin, and General Greene from Finderne.

Surely in those later days at Rockingham there were many moments of pleasant relaxation when the almost hopeless

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urgencies of the moment could be forgotten. Only a stickler for absolute certainty will demand documents to prove that many notables were there for official visits and more holiday-like week ends until word came of the Treaty of Paris. For us, the old house was enough, as we brought to mind some who may have been among the many guests at the Widow Berrien's. Certainly the Greenes were frequent callers for there must have been a great deal that the Commander had to talk about to his army quartermaster, to say nothing of the lady with whom he had danced for three full hours. Possibly Madison was at Rockingham, too, for, as a Princeton man, the country was familiar to him and he had been active on the Privy Council and in Congress since those college days; if he had come, surely his discourses put a scholarly side to the conversations these old walls heard.

Whether you choose to put any special significance in the fact that there's a town called Hamilton not far away on present-day maps, you'll agree we were not going far to "imagine" young Alexander there, inasmuch as he served his chief as secretary and confidential aide so many years. It may be that events in New Jersey, woven into the pattern of life with romantic events of the times, found the Fates chuckling over the thread that led to the snipping even as they began to unwind. Hamilton, who had organized a company of artillery, distinguishing himself in the campaign of 1776 and winning the attention of Washington and General Greene, had joined the Commander's staff as a lieutenant-colonel, and as a soldier of that rank met Elizabeth, daughter of General Philip Schuyler, at Finderne. There, perhaps, the fatal spinning began, for it was General Schuyler, Alexander's father-in-law at the time, who was defeated in a torrid election when, in 1791, Aaron Burr became senator at thirty-five.

Nothing of the tragic future looked through the small square panes at Rockingham. There, Colonel Hamilton, short, slender, dignified, and graceful, with rosy face and blondish hair suiting very well the modes of dress in those years, was an intense and vigorous fellow, one who had bridled at a



Yesterday's ladies of Hopewell were headless but Miss Susan knew them all by name and wheeled them out for introduction.



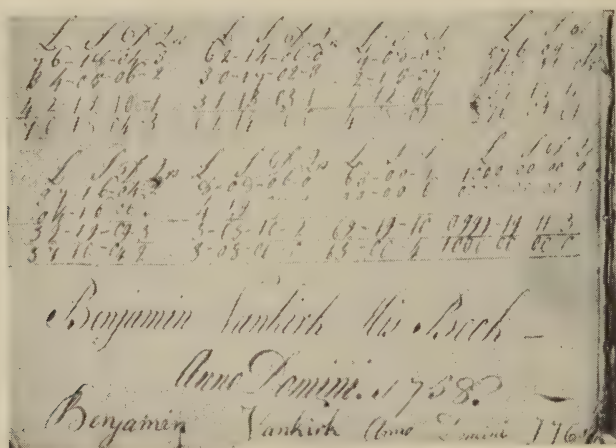
It was as if they had come to call, when the hats of Hopewell's erstwhile notables were on the table.

Another room, were the
dresses and hats of Hope-
well's children of long ago
and a bit of chintz with
memories of the Boston
Party.

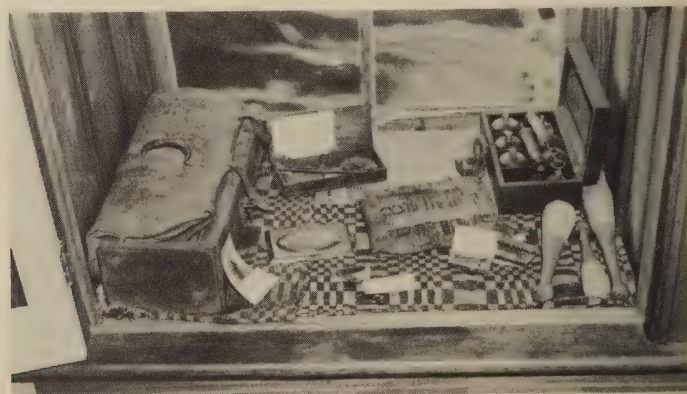




Name almost anything from the past and they'll produce it at the Hopewell museum. Pots and pans, kettles, crocks, tubs and pails, even a tailor's goose share space with a bar that saved a man hidden up a chimney.



Among the treasures of the Hopewell Museum is Dr. VanKirk's book of sums, recollective of days at school, forerunner of Brown University.



A window sill on the third floor of the Hopewell museum — but it's really a showcase full of instruments of early country doctors.

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slight reprimand from his chief and left the staff, only to emerge a closer friend, as one who acquitted himself well in a field command at Yorktown. Because the Farewell was written at Rockingham and because there has been more than speculation through the years as to how much of it was Hamilton's, young Alexander became a very real person for us even as we moved across the sward.

The Address wasn't hurried together in one sitting. Certain of what lay ahead ultimately, Washington had thought about what he would have to say for a long, long time. Some authorities have said that Madison contributed to it. Others have declared that Alexander "redressed" it, adding what he described as "such reflections and sentiments as will wear well, progress in approbation with time and redound to future reputation." If Hamilton added what some declare are "the best passages" of the Farewell with a consideration of what generations to come might think, perhaps we were not so far off in reflecting that Washington slept in a great many houses to provide shrines for posterity. On the serious side, it is difficult to realize, sometimes, that so much promise, as well as so much accomplishment in the years that followed, came to an end in the duel at Weehawken in 1804, with an insolvent father bereaving Elizabeth and seven children.

We lingered too long in the dooryard for we began to wonder if Aaron Burr himself had been there. Born at Newark, the son of a distinguished father, the Reverend Aaron Burr, second president of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton, he, too, must have known the New Jersey midlands well. But the man who was impatient for action, he who had left off studying law to join Washington's army at Cambridge only to enlist in the march against Quebec, he who had been attached to Montgomery's staff on Arnold's recommendation, later quitting the Commander's own retinue for that of Putnam after the expression of recurrent differences, could not have stayed long in Rockingham. The love of tumult that found him guarding the key pass at Valley Forge, that compelled him to save a brigade by disobeying his superiors on

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Long Island only to distinguish himself at Monmouth, had little in common with the atmosphere, the waiting, the walks along the brooks at Rocky Hill.

Imagination had been doing so well that we dreaded, almost, going inside. When fancy battles fact, the losses are likely to be on fancy's side. But it didn't turn out that way at all. Accosting Mr. Thomas Barrowman outside, we discovered that he was the custodian, and, being a Scotsman, knew the past of Rockingham as well as most outlanders do. A tall, blue-eyed white-haired dignified man, he led us through room after room, now furnished by various D.A.R. chapters, patriotic organizations and thoughtful individuals. We told him nothing of our quest, for questions sometimes gain plainer answers when one remains incognito.

Our queries disclosed that we had gone too far, probably, in picturing Aaron Burr on the scene, and in alluding to Mrs. Berrien as hostess, but beyond that, well, fancy hadn't gone half far enough. Possibly Greene was in the South all Summer, with Washington consulting him only by correspondence until they met in Trenton, where the Commander had wished Martha Godspeed as she preceded him to Mount Vernon—then the two returned to Princeton together. There were others beyond our first consideration—Elias Boudinot, president of Congress and Commissary General of Prisoners; Robert Morris, who had lodgings down in Princeton; Thomas Paine, of Bordentown, who was "on his uppers" and had written a letter, presumably, saying the country wasn't as mindful of his services as it should be; John Paul Jones, Thomas Jefferson, foreign ministers, casual friends and a veritable army of those who were and those who thought they were artists. It was at Rockingham that Paine and Washington successfully set afire gases from the Millstone's mud; at Rockingham that Boudinot was in his best party form; at Rockingham that Jefferson may have demonstrated, as fewer statesmen do now, that the cunning and cruelty of politics are sometimes balanced by such simplicities as playing the violin.

It required Mr. Barrowman's retelling of the old stories, in

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an atmosphere created by old relics, yellowing letters, swords, a canopied bed, in rooms retaining the simple lines of welcome known to all who came calling, that intense and vigorous Summer, to give new reality to the countryside as it was in 1783, with Washington coming down from Newburgh, bag and baggage, with Princeton full of wanderers, spies and officials hanging about a Congress that had fled from soldiers verging on mutiny in Philadelphia, and with the Berriens making comfortable a Mrs. Washington who was none too well and not yet accustomed to soldier servants, bodyguards and unexpected calls to hurry away. For the years and the urge to find whatever more he can, have added something to Mr. Barrowman's methods; he spoke as more than custodian, as the man who answers hundreds of letters from genealogy fans every year and who looks into this bookstore and that library for a fact or two to add to what is known.

The visits to Congress at Princeton, the round of banquets that required as much courage and stamina as action in the field, and all the conferences that must have been held beside the firesides we saw in the old house were interrupted by a swooping down of painters, begun, perhaps, by Princeton, whence John Witherspoon and his associates had come to ask the Commander to sit for Charles Willson Peale. Being gracious on this occasion led to trouble, but Washington, always polite, kept an even temper except, on one occasion. . . .

"The war had cost Washington a great deal, at least ten thousand dollars from his private purse," said Mr. Barrowman. "But when the dominies from Princeton came up here, he wanted to show his appreciation of the honor in their request and gave them fifty guineas for the college." It was rather unusual, we thought, to hear the burr in the custodian's voice and remember at the same time that one of the dominies, John Witherspoon, was a Scotsman, too, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. It was both unusual and appropriate.

We asked about the picture commissioned in France and heard the story of Joseph Wright, of Bordentown. "She did portraits in wax, they say," Mr. Barrowman declared, "and

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was the sculptress of her time." "Who?" we asked. "Oh, yes," said the curator, "that was Prudence Wright, Joseph's mother. She took Joseph and her girls to Europe and Joseph studied painting with the masters, Joseph went to Paris with a letter from his mother and as a result persuaded Benjamin Franklin to have his portrait done. Ben must have liked the picture for when Joseph left for America, he gave the youngster a letter to Washington."

We were led to the room where Washington sat for the artists who must have tried his patience more than once. Here young Wright had come, Mr. Barrowman said, to do a life mask in plaster for an equestrian statue of the retiring commander. This was an even more tedious business than the canvases. Joseph was accepted as the pupil of Benjamin West and the son of an artist who was rated high in England even as her boy began his work. But beyond that—

"He got through the job all right and then, somehow," explained Mr. Barrowman, "the plaster mask fell to the floor, breaking in many little pieces. Joseph Wright didn't know what to do. Finally, he decided to make a clean breast of it. He went to Washington, told him what had happened and asked if he would sit for another mask. But enough was enough. Washington declined to go through the process again."

That story may be old. The new angle Mr. Barrowman gave us was an indication that young Joseph may have gone back forlornly to the room used as a studio to pick up the pieces. "I've heard there's a terra-cotta bust in the country about here somewhere," said the curator, "although I haven't found it yet. Sounds to me as if Joseph Wright put the pieces together and did as well as he could with them."

Wright fared better with a portrait executed about the same time, for the Commander ordered two copies as gifts.

Even as we made the most of all that the little study with its blue woodwork and whitewashed walls and ceilings has held on to through the years, where the Commander improved his Farewell, or where Hamilton copied and bettered it as his Chief paced the near-by veranda where the address

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was to be read for the first time, someone recalled Mr. Barrowman from the past with an announcement of luncheon. But that was not until he had told us the story of Mrs. Josephine Thomson Swann, of Princeton, who with Miss Kate MacFarlane, of Rocky Hill, were chiefly responsible for saving Rockingham. These two figured largely in the formation of the Washington Headquarters Association for the rescue of Rockingham.

"It must have seemed hopeless," Mr. Barrowman said. "Most of the rooms were in disrepair. In the dining room downstairs forty or fifty Italians were eating spaghetti—this was in the quarry days. Mrs. Swann looked all through and at the end was sure she had missed something. One room, she said, had not been shown her—the room for which all the rest was background, or had been. The stout little woman who had been taking her about nodded solemnly and conducted her up the stairs again.

"A door was opened awesomely. Here, Mrs. Swann saw, the floor had been painstakingly scoured and the walls freshly whitewashed. In the corner was a table and on it, lit by the flickering glow of a candle, was a picture of Washington. This was the room, the Italian woman said, 'of the great general who once lived in this house.'"

A second call for luncheon came from the foot of the stairs. Mr. Barrowman disappeared.

Everything was forgotten, for a few moments, in the consideration of how much of Rockingham had been kept intact because foreigners crowded the rest of the house rather than invade the shrine of a hero. How much we would have missed, too, if a Scotsman had not been there! And how much of the war that Rockingham knew firsthand could have been lost if outlanders from overseas . . .

We had been at Rocky Hill a long time. In the shadow of an old house dragged bodily from oblivion, moved to safety up the hill from where the quarry had crept dangerously near, we had forgotten to push along the D. & L.,—to be conscious of the pants from Kingston.

Chapter 12

FROM AN OLD FORGOTTEN TRUNK

"God quickly stopped their wicked breath,
And sent two raging bears
That tore them limb from limb to death
With blood, and groans, and tears."

—Hymn from "Falsehood Chastised"

AUNT CHARLOTTE came down from the attic, hot and smudged and rosy. "Here," she said, "what are these?"

She held toward us two handfuls of little books, obviously old, snatched, as we learned later, from the dampish dining salon of worms which had crawled hastily to another kind of cover. Until then we had forgotten our last conversation. The theme had been those who suffer irreparable losses without knowing it, as books, yellowing papers and trinkets tied with faded ribbon are thrust aside, often thrown away, because they take up room. One doesn't have to be sugary sentimental, we said, to reflect that such seeming nonentities, deserving of the greatest care, sometimes get the least.

There had been, we learned, a grand ransacking of cupboards and emptying of trunks, with many and varying results. Particularly rewarding had been one afternoon's rummaging—these nine little books. As we examined them, we concluded that borrowing them would be too much to hope for. We would have to come back when there would be more time, to read—and read. . . .

"Oh, take them along with you," urged Aunt Charlotte. "No one knew they were there—at least, I didn't." We offered to make a list so that Miss Rogers would know, when we had finished with them, that we had returned all we took away. The list was accepted, however reluctantly. "Maybe they're of value and maybe they're not," she said. "I hate to think of what may have been tossed away as worthless in so many other places. Take them along!"

FROM AN OLD FORGOTTEN TRUNK

That's what comes of having an honest face.

The imprints themselves did not appear important at first. They rarely do. At the beginning there was hardly an indication that they had any connection with the midlands of New Jersey beyond the thoughts of the hands that had touched them and then had put them away, in a trunk that was to lie unopened and unexplored for so long.

Then suddenly we came upon names and dates inscribed in one or two and after that we saw that others had been covered with clipped newspapers to protect them through the intervening time. All at once the lives of East and West New Jersey were linked with old New Haven, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cadiz in Ohio and even the Edinburgh of 1800.

The collection included *Stories For Tommy*, a series of Scripture sketches published in New Haven by S. Babcock in 1831; *A Sister's Gift to her Brother*, of the same imprint and date; *Falsehood Chastised*; *With the Story of Bertrand and his Family*, published by the New York Religious Tract Society, "and sold at their Depository, No. 142 Broadway"; *Home* by Mrs. Sherwood, who is at once revealed as the author of *Little Henry and his Bearer*, another of Mr. Babcock's New Haven products, turned out by Sidney's Press; *The Ill-Natured Little Boy* of Sidney's Press, 1824; *The Advantages of Early Religion*, by the Rev. R. May, published in Philadelphia by the Sunday and Adult School Union and sold at Bradford's Bookstore, No. 8, South Front Street, in 1818; *Worlds Displayed, for the Benefit of Young People, by a Familiar History of some of Their Inhabitants*, printed by John Austin Crane in Newark, New Jersey, in 1809, with the Edinburgh foreword of John Campbell, dated February 25, 1800; *The Child's Grammar, or, English Grammar Illustrated*, published by H. Anderson, Engraver, in Cadiz, Ohio, and hand-colored; and finally *The American Polite Letter Writer, containing About Sixty Letters, written in the most fashionable style*, by John Kenedy in Baltimore in 1836. In addition we found the *Counsels of the Aged to the Young* by A. Alexander, D.D., published in New York and Pittsburgh in 1845,

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but this little book, bound in brown and in better condition than the others, seemed separate from the others, by years, if by nothing more.

Of the lot, the *Letter Writer*, the ancient grammar, and *Worlds Displayed* seemed to have greatest possibilities. Mr. Kenedy's letter forms gave a far different picture of men and women of his day than we had known before. *The Child's Grammar* with its quaint pictures and little rhymes seemed at once far-removed and strangely familiar when compared to systems of teaching of the present. Severities of old-time religion fairly frowned from a page of *Falsehood Chastised*. . . .

Then the newsprint wrapping of *Stories For Tommy* disclosed a name, reminiscent of an old bridge and torn pants. The name was Stony-Brook and it was part of an advertisement headed:

"YOUNG CATTLE

"Strayed from the Subscriber at Stony-Brook, near Princeton, NINE YOUNG CATTLE—four 2 year old Heifers, three of them red or nearly so, one pied, red and white—one brown 2 year old STEER with his near ear cut off short—two yearling Heifers, one red and the other red and white—two yearling Bulls, one red and the other somewhat mottled.

"Any person who will return said Cattle to the subscriber, or give information where they may be found, shall be well rewarded for his trouble.

"SAMUEL CRAFT"

The piece was probably from a Trenton paper. Today, near Stony Brook, in the same area, there are herds of grazing cattle in the same peaceful scene. However, it is doubtful if a herd as sizable as that could move off down the road without trace so as to require an advertisement. In adjacent columns, all dated 1833 and some made confusing as a certain Matilda Stillwell improved her penmanship with gliding M's and scrolled S's, are notices of Waldie's Circulating Library, the sale of a Tavern House at Clarkesville, specials on Marseilles and Knotted Quilts and "Blinds for Parlors," and varying declarations concerning white pine shingles, Cambrian Pills and foreclosures signed by Joseph DeCou, William Grant, Joseph Satterthwait, Jr., and others. *Stories For Tommy*, the little book itself, is replete with warnings of Judgment and tum-

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blings of the wicked into Hell, as it summarizes stories from the Bible, illustrating them with small vivid steel engravings.

The same Matilda left her writing experiments in huge initials on *A Sister's Gift* but the newsprint revealed nothing more than description of a tedious method for obtaining cream from milk. The inside indicates that it is the fragment from an editorial page, for the editor is battling away in the cause of temperance—"Will gentlemen contend that the friends of Temperance have no right to feel alarmed at what they see and hear of the increasing facilities for sending forth what they believe to be the procuring cause of poverty, crime, disease, shame and death? And have not such the right to say, and say openly, that they cannot help sustain a great public curse? . . ." If such campaigning has lost its force in modern times, the sentiments are singularly appropriate for much of the little book's contents.

Like the tombstone man whose name appears at the bottom of stones in cemeteries everywhere, Mr. Babcock, the New Haven publisher, was not opposed to giving himself a puff in the text. For in *A Sister's Gift* in commenting on "A New-Year's Visit," he says: "The practice of visiting on the first day of the year is a very old one, and may be made very profitable to us. By thinking of that goodness which has preserved us through another year, while others not older than we have been called away, should fill us with gratitude. George Grantham was about seven years of age, when he went to wish his uncle and aunt a 'happy new-year!' And he was pretty well rewarded for his visit, too, for they expected it and had bought for him a beautiful little book, called 'Stories about the Elephant,' published by S. Babcock and filled with beautiful pictures." Some of the pictures are described and the publisher concludes, unabashed, "You had better buy it."

Falsehood Chastised was surely a children's book, for all its fire and brimstone. It is concerned, like the other publications, with assuring the young reader that the good little boys and girls get candy and the bad a beating with a birch-broom or

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worse. "The dreadful consequences of deceit" are brought home in detail, with recollections of the punishment of Gehazi, the fate of Ananias and Sapphira and the judgment wreaked on those who mocked Elisha: "All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." This is where one of the characters of the book recalls the bloody hymn of the bears. "Bertrand and his Family" balances the book, of course, with even heavier morality, but at the end of the story there is another hymn worth quoting:

"How happy is he born or taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought
And simple truth his highest skill . . ."

Which is quite all right. But the next verse adds:

"Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death;
Not tied unto the world with care
Of princes' ear, or vulgar breath . . ."

The newsprint cover of Mrs. Sherwood's *Home* revealed items worthy of lingering reading, from a notice of a forthcoming *Novelist's Magazine* to testimonials for Rheumatic Pills, Seidlitz and Soda Powders, sold by Maynard and Noyes, of Boston, Mass., as well as by S. Paxson & Sons, Trenton. This thin bit of paper, snipped and folded to protect the book with an ugly yellow cover in 1833, the date of the imprint itself, finds the notice of a Temperance Meeting lost among those of public sales, estates and "Dugales Embrocation or Anti-Rheumatic Oil" as a sure cure for rheumatism. The meeting was that of "The Chesterfield & Nottingham Temperance Society" scheduled for the Methodist Meeting House in Bordentown Feb. 26, 1838, with the "inhabitants of Bordentown and vicinity" invited to attend and with Samuel Allinson, Jr., the secretary, singing. Roswell Howe advertised his "well known and long established Tavern Stand, opposite the Church in Lawrenceville on the Old Post Road" as being for sale "low" with indisputable title. Ruth Welling let it be

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known that she would sell on the next fair day "the late dwelling house of Robert Welling, dec., horses, cattle and hogs; sleigh, sled, wagon and harness; farming utensils such as ploughs, harrows, forks, shovels and spade; also corn on the ear, cider mill and press, empty casks, bees, together with household and kitchen furniture." Behind every line there was once an event of importance to those it affected. Behind every notice there was action, a spirit of the times that may have been buried with it, tragedy, perhaps, as in the case of the Welling sale at Hopewell.

Home has its own merits but it seems odd that with all the sentiment thrust into its conclusion, the engraving on the inside of the back cover showing a child being run over by a cart loaded with stone is hardly the right sort of anticlimax.

Worlds Displayed we found inscribed by William Dareborn, in 1771, as we concluded at first. Then we saw that William had inserted his birth date, and that his wife's, 1767, was written next underneath, beside her name, Sarah. Other births follow, as if the book were a Bible: Ann, in 1794; James, in 1799; Joseph, in 1802; and Thomas, in 1804, all children of William and Sarah. Continued examination of the page and uncertainty as to the name brought the final assurance that the family name was Dare and that William had written his words of record too close together.

"The design of this little book is to impress the minds of young people with the importance of time and eternity, and to exhibit the close connection that there is betwixt them," says John Campbell in his foreword. "Narrative appears a pleasing and engaging way of communicating divine truth to young persons. Some may judge it, when fictitious, to be an improper instrument for cutting down the corruption of men; but as God has so frequently used the same method, His example may be safely followed." So there you have divine authority for non-fiction! Away with the figments of the mind!

"The Old Testament," continues the foreword, "contains many parables and much of our Lord's instruction during his

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ministry on earth was communicated in this form. The Pilgrims Progress, Hervey's Dialogues, and many of the tracts published for the Cheap Repository, are of a similar kind, are generally and justly approved, and have done much good.

"Some of the passages may appear rather too terrific; but as the attack is designed against obdurate and strongly fortified hearts, which is the true and Scriptural description of every unrenewed soul, the shot does not appear too sharp, nor the artillery too heavy."

John Campbell then reveals that this is a second edition, revised after heeding the remarks of friends "on both sides of the Tweed," and followed exhaustion of the first edition in four months. However, this is a New Jersey imprint, carried about for years, no doubt, by New Jersey pioneers who may have found it a sustaining rock. The "narrative" plunges at once into the recounting of a dream wherein the writer, invited by a heavenly messenger, pays a visit to "the mansions of the blessed." One can imagine its readers, in days when the cover was fresh, the ink of the penned inscriptions vivid and the print sharp, seizing on a passage in the fields, aboard a rocking coach or on the highway, for aid in turning away some malicious temptation.

The Reverend R. May's *Early Religion* was a kind of catechism, with rather doleful conversations. If children were the readers or if portions were read to children, some must have sat in a corner for days in fear that Satan would snatch them upon the first move they made. "Remember," says the text, "how often I have told you that this would be your doom, if you did not think about the salvation of your soul. I told you that God would turn the wicked into hell and all the children that forgot him." And then, "Oh, see Mary, see how wide that pit is opened; what a smell of brimstone; look at those flames of everlasting fire! Instead of singing like you to harps of gold, I shall weep in anguish and despair. There the worm will never die—there the fire will never be quenched. There my misery will never end, and the smoke of my torment will ascend up for ever and ever!"

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Pastor May winds up his word-paintings of the Devil's Kingdom with a blessing particularly benign, our reading discovered, and then adds a hymn or two, capable of driving the awe-inspiring lesson home. Perhaps you can imagine a youngster of the years for which *Early Religion* was written not understanding the full meaning of the words but very sure that there was something dreadful about them, joining in the general chorus as lustily as possible:

"Happy the child, whose youngest years,
Receive instructions well;
Who hates the sinner's path, and fears
The road that leads to hell."

Or this one:

"Have you not heard what dreadful plagues
Are threaten'd by the Lord,
To him that breaks his father's law,
Or mocks his mother's word?"

"What heavy guilt upon him lies,
How cursed is his name!
The ravens shall pick out his eyes,
And eagles eat the same."

The copy of *The Ill-Natured Boy*, we saw, was another of those little morality stories which recounts a whole series of nasty tricks perpetrated by an odd-minded boy who is punished on the final page both by kindness from one he had ill-used and—there must be corporal punishment, too!—by a broken leg. Actually, our conclusion was that the fracture was too good for the boy who, in this particular episode, promised to share his breakfast with a blind man. "The little boy then gave him his hand, and, pretending to direct him, guided him to sit down in a large heap of wet dung, that lay by the side of the road. 'There,' said he, 'now you are nicely seated, and I will feed you.' So taking a little in his fingers, he was going to put it in the blind man's mouth." Fortunately the old man perceived what was happening and bit the boy's finger. Nice reading, children!

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The Child's Grammar proved quite different. While its pictures were attuned to the days of its first use, its text, ponderously rhymed, had a purpose behind it akin to so many motivations of modern teaching. The introductory, under the figures, of speech as well as personality, grouped around the table, explained the plan thus:

"One day, I am told, and, as it was cold, I suppose it occur'd in cold weather,
The nine parts of speech, having no one to teach, resolv'd on a pic-nic together.
The Article mov'd and the pronoun approv'd that the noun should preside at the feast;
But the Adjective said, though the Noun might be head, the Verb should be none of the least.
The Adverb cried out, 'Preposition, no doubt, will sit at one end of the table.'
Conjunction replied, 'let us sit side by side, and let him act as Vice who is able.'
Interjection said 'Pish, let me have but a dish, and a look at your good-humour'd faces;
Then they who think fit may exert all their wit, To make a selection of places.'
Now loud was the call,—Etymology Hall!—Run Article Sunstantive Run:
My Reader, run too, and perhaps you may view some scenes full of innocent fun."

What a variety Aunt Charlotte had stirred from cover! Reading the books as we went along, thinking about them, wondering at the reaction of readers when the paper was white, instead of yellow, when all was propriety instead of—propriety? Yes, even our ideas about that had to be dashed. Having infused the early 1800's, especially in Baltimore and the South, with glamour, good manners, reticence, modesty and all the rest that oozes from the covers of so many histories and many more romances, we were entirely unprepared for Mr. Kenedy's letters. Mr. Kenedy must have been an early Baltimore Emily Post for in his little book he presented some sixty samples of correspondence to fit almost any occasion. Our first consideration was that Mr. Kenedy had intended to be humorous, that he had chosen situations in which no letters would be written. But no, it is obvious, from other clues, that

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the author meant to be helpful, that he designed his letter-forms for times when men and women would be literally stumped for words.

For instance, the letter "From A Middle-aged Man To A Rich Widow." The man makes no secret of his feelings nor does he waste time in any but the expected compliments. He writes:

"MADAM—

"I am a middle-aged man that is on the look out for a wife, and I think that you might answer my purpose very well. I am not in the habit of passing many compliments, as I am naturally of a blunt kind of disposition; however, I think that I would make a first rate husband, providing I would be left to my own free will—but if interrupted in my business, I could not say what the consequences might be. I wish to be plain with you, and tell you exactly my disposition. I know that you had an amiable husband, and cannot but express my esteem for you for your exemplary conduct to him during life, which I cannot doubt but that you'll be in like manner to me, if it is my chance to be your next. I have no doubt but a person of your disposition might be most fitting to curb the passion of a man like me, who wants to rule, and not to be ruled. I remain, Respectfully,—"

The age of the man should make very little difference in Mr. Kenedy's way of looking at it. Here is how he advised the swain of the 1830's to address "a rich young lady":

"Miss—

"It is with the greatest esteem for your personal qualifications, and comely face, that I venture to intrude a few moments on your patience, and when I tell you that it was not until a few days ago, when I saw you at ———, that you entirely captivated me; relying now on your amiable disposition, and modest respect towards me on former occasions, although undeserving in the least of your respect or friendship, I hope that by my undeviating principles of rectitude, and sound knowledge, to be able to deserve your favor, as there is nothing can give me more pleasure than to know that you think favourably of me. In the mean time, wishing you health and long life, and all that this world can bestow, believe me to be, sincerely, your most obedient and humble servant."

Mr. Kenedy has an alternative approach to the receptive damsel with comfortable means and he believes, without any quibbling, that a young man should go after what he wants. Perhaps the would-be lover of the 1830's did, with such a letter to precede him, and perhaps, you will say, the difference

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now is that he doesn't bother with any letter. Be that as it may, our opinion has been that no matter what the approach, the boldness of expression a century ago had something on today's, with all that has been said and believed about both. Here's another "Letter from a Young Man to A Rich Young Lady":

"Miss—

"Since I had the pleasure of beholding your lovely face, and of taking notice of your slender and genteel shape, I could not refrain from thinking of you, and the more I think of you, the more I admire you. I have inquired concerning your character and have been informed that your amiable and friendly disposition makes you to be universally liked by all who know you. I hope that these few lines may be acceptable to you, as my intention is a pure one towards you, and should I be fortunate enough to attract your notice, I should think myself one of the happiest men in the world. I hope, Miss, that you will make some private inquiry concerning my character and family, as I expect you'll be fully satisfied in that respect, and at the same time, I must entertain hopes of a more intimate acquaintance with you, and would wish you to write as quick as possible.

"I remain your well wisher,—"

Here's the overture recommended by Mr. Kenedy from "A Young Gentleman to an Old Widow with a Large Estate" which, the author indicated, carried its own honeyed guarantee of success if used while the said widow was still grieving:

"DEAR MADAM—

"I hope you'll excuse me for writing to you, as I am not determined to intrude on you in the least, but owing to an acquaintance that I had with your husband, induces me to take part with you in the sorrowful situation which his death has left you in. As I am fully persuaded that you were a loving wife to him, and cannot but feel interested in his affairs, and hope that you'll consider me as your friend and well wisher, the same as if your dear husband was alive, and as there is no returning again from the grave, you may as well banish all sorrow from your mind, as we know that all our sighs and tears are of no avail. I have been dreaming of you these few nights past, and it seems to me as if he said to me, go and get married to my dear ———, as you know how my affairs are to be settled, and may you both live long and happy.

"I remain yours, etc.—"

Mr. Kenedy did not give all his time to advising young men what to write to young women well fixed or to middle-aged men with an eye to their own futures as well as the days to



In the basement at the Hopewell Museum. A collection of early New Jersey ironwork and utensils. Beyond them on the hearth is a fire-back from Hanover Furnace.

The Hunt House, as it once appeared, a sketch made before the Revolution, perhaps when the all-important council of war was held there.



Mr. Stout wanted the Old School Baptist Church built at the top, not the bottom of the hill, and when they wouldn't agree, he said he'd go to the top and build a house that would be bigger, better in every way.



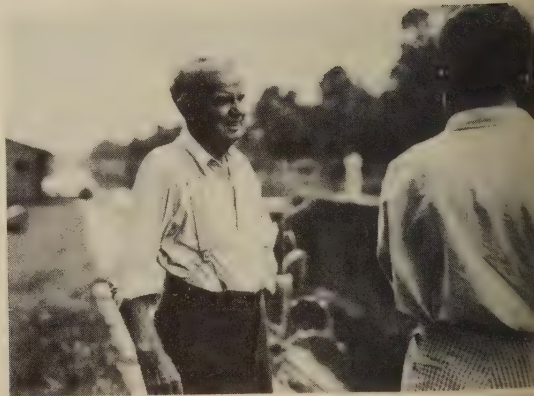
The old Delaware & Raritan Canal at Griggstown. The miller's house is unmarked and the little box-like house where the bridge-tender sat, is a county library station.



Aaron Slover, once Seelooover, was the lock-tender at Griggstown for a longer time than he "cares to remember."



Ten Mile Lock, near Weston.



"Maybe it will come back," said Harry Wilson, once the tender of Ten Mile Lock on the D. & R.

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come of moneyed widows. He saw no reason for hesitation where young women were concerned, either, once they had settled on the object of affection or worldly means. Here is his suggested missive "From a Young Lady to a Beautiful Young Gentleman":

"SIR—

"Pardon my boldness for presuming to intrude on your time or business in writing to you this letter, as I am fully persuaded that you are busy in worldly affairs; but in writing to you, I do not write as a suppliant, but as a young lady who entertains the highest esteem for your person and qualifications; it is these, and not an inordinate passion that induces me to write. I have frequently seen you and cannot help admiring your comely person, together with your admirable good character which any young lady cannot help falling in love with you, as unfortunately, I fear I have already. It may be urged by you, that I am rather too forward in writing to a young man I am unacquainted with; but when you feel the same way as I do, then you may not think it amiss—at the same time, hoping this letter may find a favorable reception, I remain with impatience for an answer which will console her who feels the most sincere affection, etc."

Fresh? Bold? Well, the girl who wrote a letter like that wouldn't be considered exactly retiring even today. Where was the girl who, we were led to believe, stayed cooped up at home rather than reveal her true affections under similar circumstances? What became of the beauty who never spoke her heart, never wed throughout a lifetime because she could not risk bespeaking an affection that might be unrequited? Certainly Mr. Kenedy knew nothing of them. If there was a rich widow available, something had to be done about her, and a letter was a safe beginning, his samples seem to indicate. With a new picture of a forgotten day in mind, we found ourselves looking for a suggestion or two on notes to other men's wives.

What was of greater concern, how much use had those letter-forms served in New Jersey? How many widowers had written to widows, copying Mr. Kenedy's words, line for line? Who had had *The American Polite Letter Writer* before dropping it in an old forgotten trunk? We wanted to ask Aunt Charlotte. Perhaps it will be easier to write her a letter.

Chapter 13

HOPEWELL? AMWELL!

"Here, lonely wandering o'er the sylvan bower,
I come to pass the meditative hour;
To bid awhile the strife of passion cease,
And woo the calms of solitude and peace. . . ."

—HENRY KIRKE WHITE: 1785-1806

PERHAPS the story of Penelope Stout should have been retold at Hopewell, or somewhere near, and not at old Nottingham Square. For here, at the edge of the red shale Sourlands, there's a Stout behind every glacial boulder, a descendant of Penelope up every shaded street.

Even before that day when we went over to Mount Rose, the village, to push up the trail in search of Mount Rose, the elevation, we knew as much, and we realized, too, that we must be careful. Already at least one of the Stouts had mixed us up on events and places—and even on the Stouts. There were, and are, so many of them! Penelope certainly started something when she pulled herself together, literally, and presented her second husband, Richard, with seven sons and three daughters!

The Stout boys, three of them—Jonathan, James and David—left old Monmouth, where their father was one of the twelve patentees of New Jersey and perhaps the best-known citizen, on a visit to the Lenni Lenapes. That was in October, 1686. Thus, with little thought of anything except making a pleasurable excursion, the Stouts were the first whites to see the country in which they were to become famous through years without end.

The Indians had been over on the Monmouth shore, of course, digging and drying clams for the Winter to come, salting away some fish and making money, actually, from shells. They had enjoyed their Summer's vacation. Naturally, they met the Stouts. To the end of her long life a more than

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impersonal relationship existed between Penelope and the tribesmen of those early days, perhaps because her remarkable rescue and cure had established an undying bond of friendship, probably because Mother Penelope was something of a curiosity, a symbol of hardy womanhood which Indians were frank to admire.

The Stouts and these natives of the midland hills probably fished together, traded knives and beads and wearing apparel, exchanging lessons in doing this and that through several seasons until, when the time for parting came in 1686, there was something more. For all you and I know, the chief, Machk the Bear, as he is at least traditionally called, shook hands and said: "You must come over and see us some time." If the Stouts looked doubtful, Machk may have added, "Up where we live nothing's spoiled and the hunting's as good as your fishing, believe it or not!"

If it was meant to be mere pleasantry, the Stouts didn't consider it so. They wanted to see this unspoiled interior. They wanted to hunt, too, and being sons of Penelope, they were unafraid and thought nothing of undertaking a journey through uncharted country. There may have been a map or two around, showing Hartshorne's grant of 1677, "Middletown" or Morris's Mills and Manor north of Shrewsbury, or even outlining the whereabouts of the Minisink Path and Lawrie's Road past Spotteswoode, but it isn't likely that the Stouts possessed one. David, Jonathan and James merely took Machk at his word, plunged through the woods and presented themselves, when October's banners were flying, at the Indian village, Minnepenasson.

Minnepenasson wasn't far from where, not long after, the settlement of Columbia sprang up. At first they said it wasn't far from Hopewell but when that assertion was checked we found out that unfailing Mr. Gordon had nothing to say about any town of Hopewell at all. To be sure, he devoted a considerable paragraph to Hopewell Township, bounding it by Amwell and Montgomery Townships in Somerset County, Lawrence and Trenton Townships in Hunterdon

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County and on the West by the Delaware River. And, after he had made mention of red shale, loam and gravel, Smith's and Jacob's Creeks and Stony Brook, with a boast concerning five fisheries, six sawmills, eight gristmills, two oil mills, seventeen tan vats and a distillery that existed in 1832, he named Pennington and Woodsville as post-towns with "Hebertown" and Columbia as villages. Pennington and Woodsville were still in place, we knew. Hebertown was Herberton on the map of the same year, Harbourton as we had found it. But Columbia!

We looked it up and sure enough Mr. Gordon, with the same authority, unveiled the clue. Columbia, he said, was "on the turnpike road from New Brunswick to Lambertville, 10 miles S.E. from Flemington, 17 N. from Trenton" and, most important of all, "formerly called Hopewell Meeting House." Columbia, in 1832, was replete with "1 Baptist meeting, 2 taverns, 1 store, and 10 or 12 dwellings." For the moment we considered that the historian had confused his villages and perhaps was describing Stoutsburg, at the cross-roads not far away, but Stoutsburg, as Stoutsville of over a century ago, had its own estimate of a tavern and six or eight dwellings.

Be all that as it may, Jonathan Stout is rated as Hopewell's first citizen. Moreover, Hopewell as a name, first given the Old School Baptist Meeting House and the village all at once, has a significance beyond the variety of explanations that are given, whether it be the Harbourton storekeeper's version of the Indian chief who knew but one greeting in English, "Hope well!" or some inspirational "To hope is well!" Columbia is gone because of postal regulations but Hopewell is Hopewell because pioneers who came to the vicinity to build their homes hit on a novel means of telling David and Jonathan apart in their conversations.

Presumably the brothers liked the neighborhood so well on that October hunting trip that they decided to go back to the shore, pack up their belongings and settle at the edge of the Sourlands. James sort of drops out of the picture. But

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David and Jonathan had become so much a part of things by the time they got their homes built, that one was "Amwell David" and the other "Hopewell Jonathan." Today Hopewell Township and village, and the divided Amwell Township, just over the midland hills, perpetuate the names.

This seemed a little too good, at first. We argued that it wasn't likely that Amwell David could be called for the place he came from when the place didn't have a name as yet. Hopewell Jonathan couldn't be so identified when the village, springing up around the meeting house, wasn't called anything very definitely. It would have been different if Hopewell and Amwell had been the names given the respective houses of the brothers. But they weren't—so, if the pair were referred to in the way we had been told, there was a better reason. There would have to be.

"There is," declared Miss Susan Weart. "You've begun at the wrong end of the story. David used to come down from his house and Jonathan from his. They'd meet, usually, at the crossroads, within hearing of everybody. Their greeting was always the same. Jonathan would greet his brother with, 'I hope you are well, David!' And David would reply, blusteringly, as if some doubt of it had been implied, 'I *am* well, Jonathan!' So, before there was either Hopewell or Amwell, their neighbors called them Amwell David and Hopewell Jonathan!"

If anything we had heard before had seemed a little too patent, if we had been skeptical at all, that was all over now. We believed Miss Susan implicitly. Never for a moment did we doubt her, in that or in anything else, and it wasn't because her sister, Miss Eleanor, was hovering by, either. Somehow it was as if these two descendants of the Stouts were the appointed custodians of the true story, guardians of the traditions of Hopewell and relics of Columbia and the near-by countryside.

It was in no way difficult to believe that postal authorities were responsible for the change that made Columbia a forgotten town, a change that came not so long ago as Hope-

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well wears its years. We stumbled on that realization when searching out Hopewell Meeting House and saw that the patriotism of the times found Columbia a popular name. The *Gazetteer* listed a Columbia in Chatham Township, Morris County; another in Knowlton Township, near the mouth of the Paulinskill, as well as a Columbia Forge, on Lubber Run, Byran Township, Sussex County. Because of the part it played in Revolutionary days, Hopewell of the Stouts may have been better entitled to Columbia as a name than the others but, on the other hand, Hopewell, as you can see, has just as much meaning behind it.

There is more to be told about the Stouts, naturally, but first you must be introduced to Miss Susan and Miss Eleanor. You might as well meet them the way we did.

Somebody had mentioned the Sourlands. Alden Cottrell had told of coming over one of the mountain trails and exclaiming over what appeared to be a rickety stagecoach, only to be told it was a school bus. We talked of Harbourn and of the tombstones in Titusville showing how the family changed the spelling of its name and then the museum was mentioned. "It's in Hopewell, somewhere," we said. "There ought to be dozens of clues there to what we're looking for, don't you think?" Alden, who lives over in Lawrenceville, said he knew nothing of it and we agreed to make the trip together. Then, one Sunday when we had no intention of going to Hopewell at all, we broke our word.

It had begun as a mere reconnoitering trip, getting some of the old roads straight, picking up a stray item here or there that had eluded us along the D. & L. We wanted to make sure of the fading road that winds out of sight behind the closed railroad station at Rocky Hill, to know with certainty that the tracks rusting in the weeds along the canal bank led eventually to the kilns of the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company, half-way up to Griggstown. We wanted to know what had become of Amwell, the village, and were inclined to believe it had become Mount Airy. Thus the hunt went on back of Mount Rose and beyond, for New Market and Prallsville.

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On the road to Mount Airy we came upon a little Methodist Church. Set squarely at the end of an enclosure that adjoined the little cemetery on the ridge, and deep-shaded by two lines of maples, this, according to the name stone, was the Amwell Church, built in 1843. The date was not particularly arresting but the name was, as was that of the pastor, the Reverend R. L. Cooper, inasmuch as many of the stones in the graveyard marked Cooper plots. The steps of the church and the shade of the trees proved suitable for sandwiches, for the meeting house on the slope was the scene of a service only on the last Sunday of each month. Perhaps it was not too irreverent to salt a tomato and jot down the lines from the grave of Rachel Harder:

"A home in heaven where our friends are fled
From the cheerless gloom of the mouldering dead. . . ."

Surely Elizabeth McPeck did not mind our sipping from a thermos of iced tea as we read the quotation from "some of her parting words" combining the lines of a hymn with a few original touches in conclusion:

"Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,
From whence none ever wakes to weep . . .
I'll soon be there. Jesus is good.
He has been with us throughout life
and with us to the end."

Whereupon, the inscription disclosed, Elizabeth fell asleep. Hannah Farlee enjoyed life to the end, and then, when there was no dodging of the issue, went along with the seraphs:

"It was hard for to yield but her Savior said Come,
And angels stood waiting to carry her home."

At length we bade the Farlees, the Tituses, Abbotts and Coopers good-bye, and hurried over to wonder about Harlingen and Blawenburg in the heart of the country settled by Dutchmen. Harlingen, we found, was described as having a Dutch Reformed Church, a store and a tavern in the red shale country of 1830. Gordon gave no notice to

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Blawenburg. We were in Hopewell almost before we knew, and in front of the little museum as suddenly. Two small signs announced that one side of the former dwelling was the library and maintained regular hours. The other side was the museum, open every afternoon, with an invitation to tea on Thursdays.

This was Sunday. We regretted that there would be no tea, just as we have been sorry that there has never been a Thursday when we could linger over a teacup. But it is doubtful if Miss Susan or Miss Eleanor, one the curator of the museum and the other the librarian, could be more gracious, more informing than they proved on Sundays. For there among old books, relics of forgotten cabinetmakers, country doctors, schoolmasters, pioneer housewives and patriots, we drifted back through the years to meet, as if face to face, the Stouts, Goldens, Houghtons, and Merrils, the Burroughs, Harts, Hunts, Mershons, Drakes, Tituses and Wellings of the village that is tucked away, well cared for, on shelves and in boxes on three floors. Here, surely, were the ghosts of companions of "Jonathan, the ancestor of the Stouts" who "came here from Middletown in this state, in the year 1706; his family . . . one of the first three which settled on the tract now called Hopewell."

At first the Misses Weart were concerned over the possibility that fun might be poked at the Baptists, the English Baptists who founded Hopewell. Someone once upon a time found them amusing, it seems. Somebody else had been inclined to dismiss Hopewell with a line or two. "Can you imagine it?" asked Miss Susan, and we were sincere in saying we couldn't.

The name of Weart itself goes back to earliest beginnings there. Wertsville, not many miles away, was once Weart's Corner, and the family, at the start, was that of Wilhelmus Werdtgen. As for the Stouts and the museum, well, this was the home of Miss Sarah D. Stout, who, when she was very young, began collecting. Her treasures, as well as those of others who have known that they must be preserved through

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whatever changes would come in the quiet little town, were left with the house in charge of the Hopewell Free Public Library and Museum Funding and Building Association. "The name goes on and on," said Miss Susan, "but be sure you get it right."

We had been told of the Old School Baptists at Harbours-ton, you remember. If one is unwary, he is too prone to conclude that the reference may be to a school converted into a church or perhaps a building which serves as both school and church. That deduction is wide of the mark, of course. One must think of Old School Baptists as opposed to Baptists of the New School, and even though they may be fast disappearing, they were rugged individualists, even as the Stouts of Hopewell, and there's much to be said in their favor.

"Just what," we asked Miss Eleanor, so as to get it straight, "were the Old School Baptists?"

She thought for a moment, waited as if she expected Miss Susan to speak, and then smiled at a museum visitor, one of the Tituses from Titusville. "They were opposed," she said, finally, "to foreign missionaries and they didn't believe in preaching from the Bible. The Bible was all right for reading—in fact, my grandmother used to go around to the houses reading the Bible where people couldn't read themselves—but that was all."

The Bible was, then, a sort of divinely inspired textbook of religion but it was not the alpha and omega of Christianity, as many concluded and many more continue to believe.

One would expect the Stouts to be definite about nearly everything. The sons and daughters of Richard and Penelope knew what they wanted, what they believed, just as their parents did. Penelope must have wondered often how different her life might have been if her first husband had survived the shipwreck at Sandy Hook. "A young Dutchman who had been sick most of the voyage, he was taken so bad after landing, that he could not travel," said Samuel Smith, in that miscellany of historical notes that took New Jersey up to 1721. "The other passengers being afraid of the Indians,

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would not stay till he recovered, but made what haste they could to New-Amsterdam; his wife however would not leave him. . . .”

Mr. Smith's account is very interesting and differs in some respects from one or two others which perhaps were products of retelling later on. The Indians “coming down the water side, discovered them on the beach, and hastening to the spot, soon killed the man, and cut and mangled the woman in such a manner that they left her for dead.” What if Penelope's young Dutch husband had been of hardier stock, had not been killed? What if Penelope hadn't crawled into a hollow tree, “lived in it mostly for several days, subsisting in part by eating excrescences that grew from it”? Whether Mr. Smith had the facts when he pictured the forgetful newcomers to New Amsterdam who “heard” of a white woman living among the Indians and who “came to her relief” later on or whether the old Indian who saved her life sought reward by taking her to her friends, as later versions have it,—what if Penelope, when “the old man her preserver, gave her the choice, either to go or stay,” she had chosen to stay? What if the old Indian “who saved her life” and “used frequently to visit her” hadn't given “three heavy sighs,” thereupon disclosing that “the Indians were that night to kill all the whites”? Suppose Penelope had chosen to deprecate the warning, as Richard Stout had done, rather than take her children into a canoe the Indian had provided, to paddle some distance away while her husband and his companions had it out with the war-hunting braves?

The possibilities are as romantic as they are numerous. Certainly “from this woman, thus remarkably saved, with her scars visible, through a long life” could not have descended “a numerous posterity of the name of Stout, now inhabiting New Jersey” as Samuel Smith put it so delightfully as early as 1720. Surely the first Baptist church of Hopewell, in Columbia village, “organized in 1715, nine years after Mr. Stout and his associates removed into Hopewell,” could not have boasted this family “furnishing 8 of the 15 members

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who constituted the church at that time." Above all, if all the "ifs" had not been fulfilled just as they were, there would have been no Hopewell, no Hopewell Meeting House from which the second was to spring in Harbourn in 1803, no strong and resolute sons, Jonathan, John, Richard, James, Peter, David and Benjamin, or sturdy daughters, Mary, Sarah and Alice. Without a hard life, one wonders if Penelope, on her deathbed at 110, could have given her last blessing to a family of 502.

You won't be talking long with Miss Susan, named for her great-grandmother, Susan Stout, or Miss Eleanor, named for their other great-grandmother, Eleanor Lane, who came from up Stoutsburg way, before you realize that in them, as well as their kin, the solidarity that the name of Stout implies, has been a precious heirloom. There was the great-grandmother who rode horse all the way to Freehold taking relief to the sick in an epidemic there and cautioning others who chose to follow her example to eat something, even if only a sandwich, before entering a room where there was contagion. And there was Eleanor, the wife of "Square Billy" Stout, who went traveling into the West alone when women didn't do such things, coming back with the tale of having placed her purse under the pillow of another woman with whom she was obliged to share a hotel room—"if she was all right, she would give it to me, I decided; if she wasn't, she'd look under mine and find nothing!"

The first church in Hopewell, the Old School Baptist Church of today, a plain and dignified building of red brick and white-shuttered doors and windows, with an entrance that compels you to face the congregation, was organized at "Hilltop," stronghold of the Stouts, in 1715. From then until about 1735, Miss Susan told us, meetings had been held at the homes of members of the congregation. By this time, the Stouts were on the increase and it is probable that a Stout was host to the services more frequently than the others. There was Hopewell Jonathan and Amwell David and Colonel Joseph of the next generation, as well as Zebulon, Benjamin,

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another David, their wives and—oh, Stouts by the dozen, really. And the Stouts were still going strong in 1921 when "The Masque of Hopewell," a historical pageant by Robert L. Scharring-Hausen, was staged for the benefit of the library and museum—it was a lot easier to enumerate the Stouts and descendants of the Stouts who were in the various casts offering the dramatic story of the Stouts than to count those who were unrelated.

Surely it was Colonel Joseph Stout who dominated the scene when the congregation met to decide about a site for the meeting house. The group gathered at Colonel Joseph's home and after the pastor, the Reverend Samuel Ogden, concluded the preliminaries, the Colonel declared that no better location could be found than on the top of the hill, there where the handful of families joined to worship God twenty years before. Inasmuch as Joseph was donating the land, he concluded that there would be no argument, no alternative suggestions.

However, Benjamin Drake spoke up and said that while the Colonel's offer was generous, the location was certainly not central. Thomas Curtis supported the contention that the valley would be better and that the climb up the hill would tax Christian zeal beyond reason, especially in Winter. Probably the argument was similar to that at Old Tennent, where the undertakers and those who gave much of their time to keeping track of the day's deaths were thinking of funerals in the snow. The cortege could not hope to maintain its dignity if the mourners began slipping downhill or the casket took a tumble. Practical-minded people probably joined in voting down Colonel Joseph's offer, politely but firmly, when they thought of those who had died from exposure after other funerals they felt they must attend.

Colonel Joseph was first amazed, then blustering. Why, not only was he donating the land for the meeting house—he was prepared to cut the timber and haul the stone! There could be no other consideration. But there was! When Pastor Ogden called for the final declaration, all but Joseph were for a church in the valley. The Colonel howled his "No!"

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and had to be reminded that "a loud voice cannot make up for lack of numbers," according to Mr. Scharring-Hausen's delightful pageant. Joseph Stout was beside himself with rage.

"Go ahead and build your church in the valley, then," he said, or something to that effect. "See if I care! Maybe you think you're going to build a big meeting house and all that but I'll build me a house here on top of the hill that will be bigger in every way. What's more, I'll never budge inside your meeting house, so there!"

Colonel Joseph was a man of his word. What he felt, he said. What he said, he meant. Not only did he set about the building of a house which stands today, five feet larger than the church in every dimension but, when the meeting house was completed, he refused to enter it. Being a religious man, he could hardly stay away, so he contented himself by going down to meeting and then sitting on the front step during service. That was in 1735. He was on the step on a Sunday morning forty years later under dramatic circumstances.

That was when a messenger arrived, seeking Colonel Joab Houghton. Colonel Joseph was moving about in the graveyard, perhaps, within hearing of the voice of the preacher, the Reverend Benjamin Cole. It was late April and the grass was growing green again in the warming sun. The messenger lingered long enough to ask if Colonel Houghton was at service and Joseph replied, with annoyance, that he never went inside and so couldn't tell. The messenger conferred with Joab Houghton during the singing of the last hymn. Dismissed by the pastor, the worshipers grouped around the Colonel as he mounted the horse block outside. Then it was that the news, that came from Lexington and Concord, was repeated.

"Men of New Jersey!" challenged Colonel Joab at the end of his announcement. "The Redcoats are murdering our brethren of New England! Who follows me to Boston?"

Every man who was there responded with a lusty "I!" and off they marched to Boston, falling in, two by two, behind the Colonel.

No wonder then that one of the two most imposing markers

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in the peaceful little graveyard in the shadow of the Old School Meeting House is a large boulder recalling Colonel Joab. He was a native of Hopewell Township and died in the village in 1795. Into his lifetime he crowded many years of active service. War was a far different business in those days than it has been since, as may have been remarked before. One fought bravely and without respite when there was need but in the lulls one returned home to accomplish other things. Colonel Houghton was at home in Hopewell when the British were occupying Pennington and when "word was brought to him by night, that the neighborhood of Moore's Mill had been visited by the enemy, and that they would probably be out the next day. Early next morning," says the record of Barber and Howe, "Colonel Houghton collected a few of his neighbors, and placed himself on the point of a neighboring mountain which overlooked the surrounding country;—presently he saw the party, who entered a house near by where Colonel Houghton and his men were stationed, after stacking their guns on the outside. The Colonel and his men now rushed from their hiding-place, seized first the arms and then their owners—a Hessian sergeant, and twelve men, whom they found regaling themselves in the cellar with Metheglin."

It was impossible to be the kind of patriot Colonel Joab was and not be a marked man—and there again the scene shifts quickly from the past to the little museum where the Misses Weart preside. For, down in a basement room where the fireplace and every nook and cranny around it is filled with andirons, bowls, kettles, griddles, candle-molds and even a tailor's "goose," all of which played a part in the early days of Columbia or Hopewell, there's an iron lug-pole on the mantel. This was the pole Colonel Houghton used when the Hessians were hunting him. He climbed up the chimney, armed with the long iron bar, jammed it across inside the chimney, and sat there till the soldiers were gone.

A marked man, too, was John Hart, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, whose grave is marked by a shaft even closer to the old church. "The Masque of Hope-

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well" included a touching scene called "John Hart In Hiding" in which the man who was a deputy from Hunterdon County in the Provincial Congress of 1775, as well as a member of the Committee of Safety, and later, in 1776, a member of the Continental Congress, is discovered at "The Rock House," a cave in the Sourlands, having eluded two Hessians sent to capture him. According to *Historical Collections*, "The children of Mr. Hart escaped from insult by retiring from the neighborhood of the troops, leaving the farm and stock to be pillaged and destroyed by the Hessians. Mrs. Hart, at this time, was afflicted with a disorder which prevented her removal, and which terminated in her death."

When the dramatic scenes of the little town were portrayed, David Bellis, a lineal descendant of John Hart, took the role of his courageous ancestor, a fugitive visited in his retreat by Mrs. Golden, the wife of a neighbor, who came not only with a basket of food and news of Joab Houghton's escape by means of the chimney while the house beneath him was thoroughly ransacked, but also the tragic announcement that Deborah, his wife, was dead. There is an uncredited quotation in the *Collections* which touchingly reveals the character of the man: "While Washington's army was dwindling down to a mere handful, this old man was carrying his gray hairs and infirmities from cottage to cottage, and from cave to cave, while his farm was pillaged, his property plundered, his family afflicted and dispersed; he was, through sorrow, humiliation, and suffering, wearing out his bodily strength, and hastening the approach of decrepitude and death. Yet he never despaired, never repented the course he had taken." John Hart died in 1780.

To leave the war for a moment, some mention should be made of Isaac Eaton's school, which, flourishing as early as 1760, is declared by the folk of Hopewell and in records to be found in the village, to have been the beginning of Brown University, now in Providence, R. I. The oldest house in Hopewell was the first Baptist school in America for higher education and was opened in 1757. The Reverend Isaac was

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the schoolmaster, with some of Columbia's most famous citizens for pupils, among them Nathan Stout, Benjamin Van Kirk, Amos Hart and John Blackwell.

Miss Susan showed us Enoch Van Kirk's arithmetic book of 1832-1834, David L. Blackwell's copybook of 1842 and an arithmetic belonging to Johnson Titus that covered 1827-1828-1829. These were teasers. Just when we were concluding that we would have to make the most of examining the school-books of pupils who were the children of those who attended Isaac Eaton's school, Miss Susan, with a characteristic smile, proffered a trump card, a book in which the painstaking lines of calculations were subscribed "Benjamin Vankirk, His Book, Anno Domini 1758." This was a book from the old school where a classical education was in progress before the Revolution!

Tucked away in the unending collection is an account book which bears the name, Stoutsburgh, spelled that way in 1830. In it appear the names of Wikoff, Hagaman, Sutphin and Skillman, still well known in the neighborhood. The Blawenburg you will find now may have been "Blaunburgh" at the time.

The arithmetic book from Pastor Eaton's school is not the only relic of Benjamin Van Kirk that Miss Susan will show you. Upstairs, in a deep window which has become a showcase, is a whole collection of equipment used by country doctors of the vicinity in early days. Although his book of sums is dated 1758, Benjamin had become Doctor Benjamin in 1768, and was practicing medicine. Here, spread about and carefully dusted, is a miscellany that makes the faint-hearted shudder, with the lancets of Doctor Van Kirk and Doctor James H. Baldwin in the foreground. It was the presence of a silver coffin-plate that made us wonder most.

"Isn't that a name-plate from a coffin?" we asked Miss Susan.

"Oh, yes," she replied, easily, as if we had asked about the hats and books or the huge leather satchel which made an old-time physician a walking hospital.

A deep, black, rocky hole in the earth near Griggstown marks the site of an early copper mine. Somewhere in the depths, where a century after, they tried cultivating mushrooms, they tell of cars loaded for the trip up, and abandoned on the tracks.



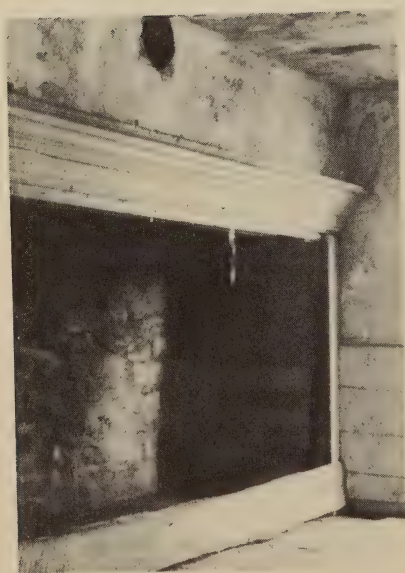
In the churchyard at Millstone are pioneers who remember when the village was Somerset Court House. That was before Major Simcoe's famous raid when the courthouse itself was burned.



In a deserted garden by the bridge at Zion is this house that they say is haunted. Eugene O'Neill lived there and James, his father, knew it well.



Sunlight streams across the portico and old garden around the O'Neill house at Zion.



For all you know, Eugene O'Neill may have thought out the plots of some of his dramas beside this huge fireplace, damp and empty now.

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"What on earth is it doing here?" we questioned further. Here was a collection of equipment used in the prolonging of life, no matter how painfully, and besides the array a grim reminder of death.

"Oh, they never let the plate go down with the coffin after the service," the curator informed us. "It was taken off, usually, and given to the widow or some member of the family!"

It would be impossible to enumerate how much of the countryside has been brought to the museum. Here, through the forethought of the founder and many of her neighbors, has been catalogued Americana whose value cannot be estimated, surely not in dollars and cents. Miss Susan took us first through two rooms on the first floor, then down to the basement, then to the second floor and finally to the third, and every room revealed surprises calculated to make eyes pop and mouth open wide.

At the back of the downstairs fireplace is a stove plate worthy of individual attention—it was made at Hanover Furnace, the location of which is marked today by only a pile of multi-colored slag. There's a homemade pair of balance scales that go back to the earliest 1700's. Grain shovels made from a single piece by William Collins, a cabinetmaker, take their place beside odd-shaped pitchforks and a ropewalk, some recalling better days at Stoutsville, or Stoutsburg. Whole collections of early china, sewing-birds and Indian relics include carpetbags and the first crude though servicable tableware for companions. Should you wonder about Griggstown, over on the canal, Miss Susan will show you cupboards that belonged to Joseph Griggs in 1798, or was it one cupboard of Mr. Griggs and another of Isaac LaRowe? After a trip or two through the museum one cannot be sure of all the details, or even of the certainty of a present-day world outside.

"And," Miss Weart declared, "we have acres of hats!"

There are, literally, acres. One of the amazing things is that Miss Susan was very certain about who wore them all. Among the contrasting designs of feminine millinery, so

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similar to styles that have been appearing in recent seasons, there is one exhibit of male headgear which is immediately arresting. This, your loquacious guide will tell you, was the hat worn by Furman Titus when, with the cockade waving in the breeze, he marched in 1824 in the old Hunterdon Militia. Below, draped before many more old books, are two splendid examples of old chintz. Written on the back of one piece is the notation to Mary Williams Pearse that it was brought ashore safely by her great-grandfather, owner of the ship, or one of the ships, from which tea was dumped in Boston harbor.

Masculine headgear of non-military attire fills one whole corner—surely a world's progress can be traced in the hats we brought out and put upon a table, giving the appearance of a hall in a country home on beau night, if indeed it would be possible to have the swains of varying periods assemble on the same evening. Along the wall hung a lovely collection of samplers and Miss Susan remarked on the strawberry that was worked into innumerable designs.

"What did the strawberry mean?" she asked. "We would like to know. There must have been some meaning, for it's used time and again, you see."

Back of the ladies' hats were the children's dresses of early Stouts and their neighbors. Two other rooms disclosed the wearing apparel of women leaders in old Columbia from the 1700's on, all, we discovered with an eerie shock, draped on dressmaker's forms or makeshift dummies to keep them upright. Perhaps the involuntary shudder was due to the fact that they were headless or that Miss Susan called them all by name.

"Now, here, Aunt Mollie," she said, "you deserve more prominence than that. Those are real folds. Now, Mrs. Osie Whitlock, you stand here. Which of the tall girls will I put beside you? This is Mrs. Abraham Stout." We almost bowed as if it were an introduction. "See here, Mrs. Baldwin, there's no sense falling over. Of course, it's been quite a while since she's traveled, you see."

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Every museum, Miss Susan pointed out, has collections of Sunday clothes. "But we," she went on proudly, "have everyday clothes as well as Sunday."

There is a music room, too, with many early American imprints, some from the days when each copy of a song, as far as notes were concerned, was done by hand. As much as we saw, tracing the life of a half-dozen or more generations in the home, at Sunday service—before and after the "split" of 1830—in the fields, in the army, around the fire and at the table, Miss Weart impressed us with the fact that much more has been put away, "in the hope of more room and better days."

It was Miss Eleanor who told us that the house that Colonel Joseph Stout built five feet larger in every way than the Hopewell Meeting House was also the Hunt House, two miles northeast of Hopewell, used for the famous council of war that preceded the Battle of Monmouth. Miss Susan showed us a sketch of the house, made by Elizabeth Boggs in 1816.

"So many people think when they see Hunt's house as it is now that it's the way it always was," she told us. "It's not the same house at all. Only the wagon house of today is part of the original. This was the site of the earlier Stout home, 'Hilltop,' but you only have to look at the old sketch and compare it to see how different it is." Miss Susan and Miss Eleanor ought to be authorities in the matter, for this was the Weart homestead.

There was no intention on our part to go up the mountain-side and check up on the conclusions of Miss Susan and Miss Eleanor concerning the Hunt House. It was later on, when we had been deeper in the Sourlands, that Alden Cottrell declared that we ought to see the place where the famous council of war was held. We agreed that it would be nice to see it but that since there had been so many changes, there wouldn't be much point.

"We've talked with Miss Susan and Miss Eleanor, you see," we said, "and they say so many changes have been made.

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Once the place was rough-cast and later that was taken off and they say that it wasn't a very good job. There's really no point in going, unless you specially want to, for the ladies at the museum had a picture of the Hunt House as it was, and that's much better," we concluded, oh, ever so sure of it all. "All sorts of claims are made for the house that's there now which aren't true in the slightest degree."

Alden looked at the photograph of the sketch made in 1816 and thought about it. "I'd like you to meet the Pomeroy's," he said. "They live in the Hunt House now—and really, they make no claims for the house. The only thing they can't understand is why, as they've heard the story, the old house was torn down and then built up in the same place again because of a spring in the cellar."

That was how we came to see the Hunt House. Oddly enough, we would have passed it up if it hadn't happened that way. The old manor overlooking the valley, where Washington and all his generals gathered late in June, 1778, to discuss the plan for a battle in Monmouth, was compared, line for line, as far as the exterior went, with the picture. Unfortunately, the Pomeroy's were away, but a caretaker with a German accent appeared and kept an uncertain dog quiet, chattering all the while we pattered about the forgotten garden, and spying critically from beneath a giant beech.

There are all kinds of dates and initials in a variety of places. In one, is a "W.S.—1787" and in another an "L. Stout, 1764" with the six over the seven rather than beside it. Still a third inscription may be discovered: "I.R.S." with the "S" higher than and between the "I" and "R." At that, the "I" may be interpreted as a "J" by the painstaking examiner. Perhaps the wagon house is oldest, perhaps the rough-casting that was added, was removed without skill and perhaps the porch that's there now doesn't belong, but, for the most part, the Hunt House still honors the pioneer Stouts in its own lingering charm.

It was on June 24, 1778, that Washington assembled his

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best minds at the Hunt house for discussion of an attack on the British column. The Commander proposed the action, concluding that General Clinton, making slow progress because of a large quantity of baggage and the fact that the Jersey militia was ripping up every bridge it could, was heading for Sandy Hook by way of Monmouth Court House, the Freehold of today. Lee, Green, Stirling, Lafayette, Steuben, Knox, Poor, Wayne, Woodford, Patterson, Scott, Duportail and Colonel Scammell, Washington's adjutant, all were there in one of the most important and importantly attended conferences of the Revolution. Here it was that General Lee was the only opponent of the plan to force an engagement.

"Randall Stout lived where Lee stayed overnight," said Miss Susan. "He was upset because the General insisted on taking his dogs to bed with him!"

The museum contributed a new angle on the "lost" Somerset Railroad, as well as all the rest. When we heard the facts recorded at Hopewell we wondered if all we had heard before was wrong, if all who had contributed details were as well-informed as they claimed to be. It seemed now as if the abandoned banks we saw were once completed for bridges and that trains actually ran across them to Millstone. The line, carrying irregular passenger coaches through from the Delaware at Somerset, was operating in 1876—and surely we had reason to expect that memories should not prove as faulty in recalling "The Frog War" of so recent a time.

The Delaware and Bound Brook Railroad, later a part of the Philadelphia & Reading, it was explained, laid tracks from Bound Brook to the rails of the Pennsylvania, in Hopewell. As Mr. Scharring-Hausen includes in his "Masque of Hopewell" by way of giving the argument for a scene, "To prevent the D. & B.B. from making a crossing, the P.R.R. stationed an engine at the junction, which was compelled, however, to run on a switch at Hopewell whenever a regular train came through. One night when the engine was at Hopewell it was chained fast by the D. & B.B. men, who then proceeded to lay the crossing, or frog, which joined the two sections of

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their track. It was feared that the rival gangs would stage a battle so the militia was called to the scene. The frog remained in place and in a few years the excellent service of the new road spelled the ruin of the old one . . ."

"That was in December, 1876," Miss Susan said, "when there were only twenty-four houses in Hopewell." Obviously the Hopewell of the present owes much to the outcome of "The Frog War" even though we learned that those who spoke with such certainty of a road that was built from Somerset and never used should have looked up the facts from the Hopewell end, to learn of a "Toonerville" line that was outlawed by larger interests.

There was nothing wrong with the memories of the ladies at the museum and library. They may wonder which Stout was which now and then but no one can blame them, with so many Stouts for miles around. In a pinch, they can go to the family tree, framed and hung appropriately among so many things that belonged to Stouts and to old Columbia. As we went away, reluctantly because we had had such a pleasant time, uneasily because we had a feeling of needing a week to see and note the significance of all the treasures, Miss Susan's eyes twinkled as she told of reporters on the Lindbergh kidnaping "who had to go all the way to Zion, deep in the Sourlands" to find anything to write about, on dull days.

When we went downstairs we heard her talking to the pioneers of Hopewell's past, among the wide and noisy dresses in one of the third-floor rooms. "Well, ladies," she was saying, "did you enjoy having company? Did you have a nice time?"

Chapter 14

LOCKED WITH THE PAST: FURTHER ALONG THE OLD D. & R.

"To the good people of New Jersey and all others whom it may concern:

"It is hereby ordered that the wife and children of John Honeyman of Griggstown, the notorious Tory, now within the British lines and probably acting the part of a spy, shall be and are hereby protected from every quarter until further orders. But this furnishes no protection to Honeyman himself."

—LETTER OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

"Circumstances of political importance, which involve the lives and fortunes of many, have hitherto kept secret what this paper now reveals. Harvey Birch has for years been a faithful and unrequited servant of his country. Though man does not, may God reward him for his conduct.

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

—JAMES FENIMORE COOPER: *The Spy*

LINGERING beside the Delaware and Raritan locks they tended for more than forty years, hoping the canal will be restored before they die, two men confess to misgivings. Men come, making surveys, talking of what may be done. Some predict a restoration, a revival of the busy days. Others say the canal is finished, that the water is going to waste and will be piped somewhere else. Still others come to talk and take pictures, as we did, and all the sadness of romantic days in flight settles on the rotting gates and rusting wheels.

Each day's prophecy, brought to Blackwell's Mills, to Griggstown, Millstone and Ten Mile Lock, near Weston, whether by a wandering fisherman, an engineer or just a man with a camera from the world outside, is reflected in the faces of at least these two, Aaron Slover and Harry Wilson. Aaron, whose ancestors have been in the Millstone Valley since the days when, as Seelooveers, they joined more than half the folk of the neighborhood in speaking Dutch, is perhaps a little more optimistic than Harry, who has been sleep-

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ing in the house beside the D. & R. for forty-four years—not continuously, you know—and doesn't want to move.

"This valley's dying out," Aaron said, shaking his head. "The Griggstown people are all gone now, except for me and Doc Mosher—and he's ailing after a stroke."

"I was here six years with the man who was in charge before me and I was head man at Ten Mile Lock for Thirty-six," Harry Wilson told us. "Nothing's been done since that March when, after we had spent the Winter fixing things up, as usual, they came and told us it was all over."

Although the last craft went through the canal little more than half a dozen years ago, the D. & R. was a long time dying and six years of nothing have been like a drawn-out funeral. It seemed almost as if these two lock-tenders had been buried, too, along with the rest. Certainly we never expected to find them there, making the most of their pensions, bristling at inactivity, ready to build a new dream in the ruins of broken expectations. Surely they knew that even before the canal days brought a century of trade, there was much that was memory along the Millstone River.

Kingston, on some old maps as Kingstown, is not the only village mentioned by Gordon. Griggstown has a *Gazetteer* paragraph all its own as "on the right bank of the Millstone river, and on the Delaware and Raritan canal, 5 miles below Kingston, and 9 south of Somerville," containing "store, a tavern and some half dozen dwellings. A grist mill formerly here has been torn down, being on the route of the canal, which follows the bank of the river. A copper mine near this place has been wrought, but not with success."

For that matter Rocky Hill, the town, a century ago was "at the N.E. base of Rocky Hill, on the Millstone river and turnpike road from New Brunswick to Lambertsville" with "a grist and saw mill, a woollen manufactory, 2 stores, 2 taverns and 12 or 15 dwellings." To linger a little longer among the ancient estimates, Millstone's description not only achieved a larger total of dwellings but also drew a compliment as to their appearance. Once he had formally located it for his readers, Gordon said that "it contains 2 taverns, 3

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stores, a Dutch Reformed church, and between 30 or 40 dwellings, in a level, fertile, red shale country." Then the flowers: "Some of the dwellings are very neat and commodious."

Blackwell's on Finley's map of yesterday is Blackwell's Mills of today and one would reasonably expect the reverse, for there are no mills now. Yet this "hamlet of Hillsborough t-ship" was "pleasantly situated, in a fertile country" 100 years ago and contained "a large grist mill, fulling mill, store and several dwellings." Even then a bridge crossed the Millstone at Blackwells (Mr. Finley had run out of apostrophes) but that isn't surprising when one realizes that Peter Schenck was grinding flour there in 1776.

Weston may have a sound that's up-to-date but Gordon saw it and wrote about it in his day, putting it "on the Millstone river and on the Delaware and Raritan canal" saying also that previously it was called Rogers' Mill "about a mile and a half from its confluence with the Raritan river, and 2 miles below the village of Millstone." Although it has been altered, and when we were there invaded by picnicking swimmers who were none too careful of the traces of their visit they were leaving behind them, the mill at Weston which tradition says was in operation seventy-five years before the Revolution is still beside the historic waterway.

Griggstown may have been Griggstown, and Rocky Hill as it was in the beginning, but Millstone had been more important and the scene of colorful events it has never surpassed: Millstone was Somerset Court House, the County seat, when Colonel John Graves Simcoe and his raiders made their famous sally through the valley, setting torches to the Court House building itself and destroying it once and for all in 1779. Add that to the story of John van Doren's wife, hanged by the heels when Hessians were seeking information to add to their supply of stolen fowl and delicacies and—well, even Aaron Slover's pioneer kinfolk may have been telling inquisitive wanderers of another day that "the valley's a-dyin' out, that's what it is!"

We saw Aaron at Griggstown on several occasions and

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although he remembered the abandoned copper mine, the changes that have come to the village, and the strange details of the battle of the canal with the railroad, both under the same management part of the time, he dug up nothing on the original Griggs. Our first visit was late in the day—that was the time that his mispronunciation of a man's name gave us a wrong impression. He said Griggstown was the site of the "Honeymoon" house and all at once romantic ideas began to weave a pattern. Then we found out that he meant Honeyman, John Honeyman, the spy many old-timers in Griggstown have insisted James Fenimore Cooper had in mind when he wrote his historical novel of that name.

Honeyman lived up the road along the canal, above the bridge. In his day, or in his days at Griggstown, at least, no canal or bridge were there, but the house that was his home remains standing, although it has been changed a great deal from the original exterior. Aaron Slover said so, coming close to smashing other illusions altogether when he went on to declare that even "Rockingham" wasn't much as he remembered it as a boy. That Honeyman was no myth and that he lived in Griggstown is proven by many things as well as by a letter which gave John's family protection none too soon.

It was after we had been in Griggstown the last time that our trail crossed that of William E. Blackman, or moved along beside it, for the second time. We had met him first pleasantly enough at the Old Barracks in Trenton. Then, later on, when Sons of the Revolution celebrated Columbus Day with a pilgrimage to some of the towns in the Pines, we met him again and it was revealed that he was something of a John Honeyman expert. The lowlands had been painted in reds and golden yellows by the first frosts of October, and Bill, as all the others called him, wore a battered, black headgear they declared was Ong's Hat. Francis Delavan Potter, who arranged the tour, joined Newton Bugbee in asserting that Bill, seeking to prove that his famous ancestor was ever a patriot and nothing resembling a Tory at any time, knew more about Honeyman, the spy, "than any man alive."

We told Bill that no one had at any time voiced such a

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suspicion to us. "Maybe so," Bill answered, in his perfunctory way, "but just the same, I wanted to make sure." And, as he revealed the details of his painstaking quest, the result was certainty itself, in the midst of myriad unrecorded details. Having consulted everything, from a book, *Our Home*, by the late Judge Van Dyke, to family records, data on burials and deeds of ancient realty transactions, Bill Blackman was kind enough to show us the many close-typed pages that were the outcome of his task.

John Honeyman was born about 1729, in Armagh, Ireland, as far as can be determined. He enlisted there in 1758 under General Wolfe. It was aboard the frigate *Boyrie*, when Wolfe was a young colonel, in days that followed Braddock's defeat when the memory of the massacre at Fort William was still vivid, that John first came to notice. Conscripted into the army of the Crown and an unwilling soldier, he was on deck one night, somewhere in the waters of the St. Lawrence, when a quick action prevented Wolfe's fall down a companionway. Colonel Wolfe thanked John, told him he had saved his life, made sure of his name and commended him to General Abercrombie.

Subsequently John served in the attack on Louisburg, after which Wolfe, commended for his bravery, was made a general. Perhaps Wolfe was superstitious and wanted John beside him in case anything unexpected happened. Perhaps he was merely mindful of past favors. Whatever the reason, Honeyman became a member of Wolfe's bodyguard, remaining at his side through the defeat before Quebec and later, the daring climb of the Plains of Abraham. Honeyman was only a few paces away when Wolfe fell, mortally wounded, and he aided those who carried the valiant commander away, as he put it to Judge Van Dyke, who was a boy when John Honeyman broke his customary silence to talk about it, "walking most of the way in blood." John remembered the scenes of the battle when he was ninety, as if all of it had happened but the day before. With the surrender of Quebec, and later, Montreal, the war was over and Honeyman was discharged.

Several years passed without any accounting, despite the

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search for detail, first by Judge Van Dyke, and later by Bill Blackman. It was in 1774 that the young Scotch-Irishman turned up in Philadelphia, his discharge from the army of General Wolfe, and the letter asking him to serve the dead commander as bodyguard, among his prized possessions. These documents, Judge Van Dyke said, were still in Honeyman's possession long after the Revolutionary War. Honeyman had learned a trade and was a weaver; he also knew something about being a butcher. Thus it is reasonably supposed that in the interim John had been engaged in one or the other pursuits, meanwhile adding a wife, Mary Henry, a girl from Ireland, more than adequately equipped to face the future that was to be her husband's, in the New Jersey midlands.

It was in Philadelphia that Honeyman first saw Washington. There were several interviews in which the Commander in Chief could not help but be interested by the papers carried by a young man who had been a courageous soldier and who was seeking a new cause for which to fight. It may be that the removal of John and his wife and several young children to Griggstown, in 1776, was part of the plan evolved in Philadelphia, but that is uncertain. However, Washington and John Honeyman conferred in New Jersey only once and that was near Fort Lee, shortly before the retreat of the American forces into Pennsylvania. "The interview was hurried," wrote Judge Van Dyke, "but continued long enough to adopt a plan of operation." John Honeyman "was to act the part of a spy for the American cause in that part of New Jersey where he was most familiar. As he was a Scotch-Irishman, who had been already in the British army, and witnessed its triumphs, it would not be considered strange if he still adhered to their cause."

John was to act the part of a Tory, "and quietly talk in favor of the British side of the question. In the capacity of butcher he was to commence some trade with them," wrote the famous jurist, "and to furnish them cattle and horses when their armies came into the State, which was certain to speedily take place. This course he was to pursue while he

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resided within the American lines, so long as it should be safe to do so, and if danger at home became too threatening, he was to leave his helpless family amidst its angry foes and go over within the British lines, there to continue his occupation as butcher, and to supply the British with cattle."

Thus Honeyman was to get a line on the enemy, what it was planning to do, what the strength of its position was and when important things were about to happen. "As soon as he could learn anything with reasonable certainty, he was to venture, as if by accident, and while avowedly looking for cattle, so far beyond the army lines as to be captured by the Americans. Washington was to offer, if need be, some reward for his arrest, but always with the imperative direction that he should be taken alive and brought before him in person, his object being not only in some way to protect his agent, but to receive his communications in the absence of all listeners, and then to devise some unsuspected means for him to make his escape back to the British lines."

If the fable that Honeyman was a Tory can be traced to anything, it is the understanding, put abroad in the ranks of both sides, that Honeyman had capitulated to the invading forces. Honeyman, his wife and General Washington were the only ones who knew the true story. John saw the Commander in Chief in November before the battle of Trenton. A month later, he was moving along with the British so that, aware of the conditions that existed among the Hessians and knowing they would celebrate Christmas with even greater relaxation, he saw the need of immediately contacting Washington.

"With a large cart whip in one hand and a rope in the other, a rather greasy-looking coat on his back," wrote Judge Van Dyke, who pointed out that none of the details were of his imagining, Honeyman started out "in search of cattle" along the banks of the Delaware. He spotted two American soldiers before they spotted him and, making a show of chasing a farmer's cow, allowed himself to be caught, as the horsemen believed, with great difficulty. There was an exciting chase,

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a few stumblings on the ice and then, amidst protests that he was but a poor tradesman ekeing out a living for his family, John surrendered with two pistols pointed at his head. "The butcher was firmly bound with his own rope and mounted behind one of the troopers, while the other rode by his side with the other end of the rope fastened to his saddle-bow. He was taken across the river and borne in triumph to the headquarters of Washington, with some demonstrations of satisfaction. The Commander had already admonished his troops to look out for such a person, who was understood to be dangerous, to arrest him if possible and without fail to bring him to him instantly." The ruse had worked.

Honeyman was, above all, a clever actor. He was the center of a convincing scene at Washington's headquarters in the field. "Washington," wrote Judge Van Dyke, "was unusually grave, but spoke calmly to the spy, telling him it was painful to see him in such a plight; that he had heard of him before, and that for some time his troops had been trying to arrest him." Then the General cleared the room. There was an interview lasting half an hour, after which the guards were recalled, told to stand outside the door of a log-house prison and instructed to make ready for a court-martial in the morning.

"Late in the night, when all were quiet, and the camp asleep, except here and there a guard whose tramp could be plainly heard, a fire was observed to be breaking out in a dangerous place. It was small and could be extinguished in a few moments if done at once. No one was near to do it. The guards, who were awake, hesitated for a moment, but flames ascended rapidly, and then they instinctively rushed to the fire. In a short time it was subdued. They now returned to and remained faithfully at their posts till morning. When the morning came the door was still locked but no one seemed to know how. 'He must be a burglar,' they said, 'as well as a traitor, and was doubtless armed with false keys.' The camp was soon in great commotion. Washington seemed exceedingly angry. But three days afterward the latter was with his army in Trenton, the city with its Hessian occupants being captured.

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Rahl was slain, and the country was saved!" Judge Van Dyke ended with a triumphant note of his own.

Thus it is reasonable to assume that the butcher-weaver of Griggstown had supplied the necessary information to achieve the victory at Trenton, so important to the outcome of the war. Washington had arranged the whole thing, the fire, the duplicate key, the escape. And Honeyman, eluding the outer sentinels, made his way over the ice and through chilling waters of the Delaware to the British camp where he related the story of his capture and thrilling escape. Rahl himself censured John for needlessly exposing himself and then asked many questions. Honeyman said the condition of the Americans was really pitiable and the Hessian commander decided there was no use getting excited about any danger from that quarter. Honeyman chuckled to himself, became the wandering butcher once more, and set off to New Brunswick.

What took place in Griggstown is of equal importance. The news of John Honeyman's capture and escape reached his home town "where the indignation and excitement reached the highest point." John was already known as a Tory there and now the names, "British spy, traitor and cut-throat" were added as, on one subsequent midnight, his house was surrounded by a mob. Many foolishly assumed that Washington's secret agent would return there and so they besieged it, demanding a thorough search of the premises and, perhaps, destruction of the homestead by fire. Piecing together what Honeyman himself undoubtedly revealed to his inquiring young friend, the youth who was to become a judge, the late jurist wrote:

"His wife protested that she knew nothing of his whereabouts, and seemed grieved at his misconduct, but this only increased the demand and tumult. She soon after unlocked the door, and, waving her hand, asked the crowd to listen for a moment. They became quiet, and she inquired who was their leader. The answer, 'John Baird,' came from all directions. Now John Baird was one of her well-known neighbors, a young man only eighteen years of age, of stalwart frame,

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unshrinking courage and unexceptionable character, who had from the first espoused the cause of the Colonies with all the energy and enthusiasm of youth. He was afterward in the service, and came out of it bearing the title of Major. In his old age he received an honorable pension from the Government. The writer was well acquainted with him during his later years and he was one of the persons from whom much of the information was received. When the wife of Honeyman heard the name of Baird her apprehensions subsided, for she knew him well, and knew no harm could come to her or her children so long as he controlled affairs. She invited him to her. He went. She handed him a paper and asked him to read it aloud to those outside. He did so after first carefully looking it over himself." The paper which he read was as follows:

"To the good people of New Jersey, and all others whom it may concern:
"It is hereby ordered that the wife and children of John Honeyman, of Griggstown, the notorious Tory, now within the British lines, and probably acting the part of a spy, shall be and hereby are protected from all harm and annoyance from every quarter, until further orders. But this furnishes no protection to Honeyman himself.

"GEO. WASHINGTON,
"Co.-in-Chief."

Even though the house in Griggstown has been changed, one has little difficulty in imagining the scene, after reading Judge Van Dyke's record of what happened. There are cries in the night. Torches burn and reveal faces that were friendly, now transformed by indignation. Then, suddenly, a question is asked by a woman who appears on the porch. There is a momentary babbling. Then John Baird attains full silence and reads Washington's words, in Washington's writing. Confused and confounded, the crowd disperses.

After Justice Van Dyke wrote of Honeyman as he did, A. Van Doren Honeyman, great-grandson of the spy, wrote to him asking where he obtained all the facts. The Judge responded cheerfully that all the early history of the man who forever made Griggstown famous came "either directly or indirectly from him." The family knew the details and Mrs. Honeyman, it was pointed out, "seems to have known as much

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about her husband and his affairs as he did himself, and through her, rather than him—for he never spoke much about them, himself, to his children—they passed into the family.”

Judge Van Dyke remembered Honeyman’s daughters referring to the mysterious events of the war, events that added more mystery because their father, who had grown to button his lip habitually, and who didn’t believe, obviously, that what had been a secret so long should be made public, with any sort of boasting, later, admitted things to be true only after someone else had recounted them. The jurist’s Aunt Jane filled many of the gaps, however, for she was thirteen when her father was away and when John Baird led the mob that stormed the house. Aunt Jane knew that her father had been accused as a Tory, that her mother bit her lip many a time when she would have preferred to deny the claim and that afterward, when Honeyman was reconciled with the whole neighborhood, Washington himself came for a Griggstown visit that reassured the last doubters. “My impression is,” wrote the Judge, “that the spy was ever inclined to ‘keep shady’ on the part he had taken in the war, except to a few, and was anxious to have the British and their adherents believe that he had been faithful to them throughout, because by such means he was able to be of immense service to his neighbors by his success in getting back horses, cattle, negroes and other property, which had been carried away by marauding parties of the enemy. That he accomplished these things to an unusual extent was well known. . . .”

One day Judge Van Dyke went down to Bridge Point, near Griggstown, and while there he had the good fortune to meet none other than old Major Baird, none other than the John Baird who had read Washington’s letter from the portico of the Honeyman house, sending John Honeyman’s neighbors back to their homes.

“John Honeyman was my grandfather,” said Judge Van Dyke, and at once was given not only a complete denial of any Tory implications but the whole story, from beginning to end.

Later on, the Judge was employed by the heirs of a cele-

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brated Tory to recover an estate of over a thousand acres granted their ancestor in Nova Scotia in consideration of his services to the Crown. "Major Baird was then dead," the lawyer wrote of that visit, "but I found an old resident and Revolutionary hero, John Ten Broek. Supposing he had known my grandfather, I inquired of him on that subject, and told him that he, too, I had understood, had been a Tory. He said a great many people had thought so, but that 'Johnny Honeyman did not have to go to Nova Scotia,' and went on to tell me the same story which had been related by Major Baird."

Judge Van Dyke was emphatic in his conclusion that John Honeyman was not only not a Tory but was also personally responsible for what happened at Trenton. That he had been in Washington's service was proven, he said, by the fact that while his family at Griggstown was in ordinary circumstances, making the most of what John had earned as a weaver prior to the days of war, considerable money came to him with the winning of independence. In 1793, he had removed to Lamington, and soon after he was the owner of two of the best farms in his neighborhood. "He owed nobody," Judge Van Dyke declared, "and I remember hearing in my early boyhood my mother and father conversing about his property, which they valued at \$11,000. Nor did he ever make any money by farming. I think therefore that not very long prior to his removal from Griggstown, he must have received some considerable sum of money from some quarter as compensation for very valuable and extraordinary services rendered."

More than Judge Van Dyke's investigations centered at Griggstown. The late Adjutant-General William S. Stryker, of Trenton, who dug up much valuable information on forgotten facts about the Revolution, discovered that Honeyman's patriot neighbors actually brought an action against him, an inquisition bearing the date of June 9, 1778. Hendrik Probasco, Hendrik Stryker, Thomas Skillman, Reynier Veghtem Peter Stryker, John Stryker, Cornelius Lott, Frederick Van Lew, Abraham Ditmass, Abraham Beekman,

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Christopher Beekman, Nathan Allen, Joest Kershow, Garret Voorhees, Joseph Hageman, Garret Terhune, Jr., and Martin Nevius, "good and lawful men of the said county," went before Edward Bunn, Esq., and swore that Honeyman "did aid and comfort the enemies within this State against the form of the allegiance of the State, the Government and the Dignity of the same."

Presumably there were proceedings against Honeyman before that, for among some papers purchased by Alvin P. Johnson, of Boston, was an inventory of "the lands, goods and chattels of John Honneman, as a disaffected man of the State." On the list were two weaver's looms, a large spinning-wheel, and everything from bells, casks, piggins and stove plates to reeds, bundles of flax, wood and pleasure "slays" and even two heifers. The lack of silver on the list indicated to General Stryker that the owner of this array was not a wealthy man at that time.

In the old churchyard at Lamington where John Honeyman became a pewholder in 1793 and a member in 1821 are the graves of Washington's spy and his first wife, Mary Henry. The second wife, Elizabeth, is not buried there; referred to by those who claimed to have known her in somewhat unpleasant terms, the woman who became the second Mrs. Honeyman was twenty years his junior. There is nothing in the simple inscription on the stone to announce to the world the celebrated character of the man any more than there is anything about the house at Griggstown to recall the scenes that once threatened it.

Many find similarities in the story to those in the concluding lines of *The Spy* but perhaps there's a little too much imagination in that. Surely, as Bill Blackman said, it is more important to look at a house in Griggstown and remember, better than many at Griggstown will, that John Honeyman was no Tory at all but a clever, daring fellow, the equal of "Harvey Birch" and more than a strange, shadowy figure by chance remembered in connection with a "Honeymoon."

"Yes," said Aaron Slover, disliking the reproof, "but that

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was a long time ago." He gave his gray head a toss and swung a sinewy arm as he sought to exterminate a fly. We told him more than once that it was impossible to think of him as seventy-two. "That was a long time ago—and I wasn't here then," he declared.

"Your people have been here a long time, though. What was that you were saying about the Seelooveers?" we asked him.

"Oh, yes. Seelooveers—nothing but vowels. No wonder they cut it down. Just like they're like to cut down the Honeymoon story. There was a time when people had more leisure, or else they took it. They could take their time pronouncing longer names and words like that. Now you've got to make it short and snappy."

Aaron had been reading Joe Lincoln's *Great-aunt Lavinia* the afternoon of our second visit. That ought to have been a clue, for he soon proved his family was near the Cape in 1629.

These were the Hulls, on his mother's side, he said. On the paper was a list of names and dates, material for a family tree. Beginning with George Hull, son of Thomas, who was born in 1590 and went to Boston in 1629, the generations were traced through a couple of Corneliuses, a Nathaniel, Aaron and John Jabez to Hettie Maria, Aaron Slover's mother. Aaron was born in Princeton in 1866.

"You must have come down here the way we traveled as a boy," he told us, pleased by the thought. "You turned in from Kingston, opposite the Heathcote Road, at the corner where Van Tilburgh's tavern used to be—at least it was there after the Battle of Princeton, when the Continentals came up toward Rocky Hill."

Aaron said his father was Abraham Selover. "You see," he went on, "they were cutting the name short already. They had had a lot of time to do it because the original Seelooveer here got a land grant from Peter Stuyvesant. Lady was telling me the other day—said she found a book up in her attic showing where my father's uncle worked as a carpenter here in Griggstown. That was in 1802. What do you think he got as

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his wages then? Eighty-seven cents a day! Helpers got fifty cents!"

Hettie Maria's father was John Jabez and he was a surveyor. "He had been near Cranbury," Aaron said, "but he was here when the canal came through and the survey work was right in his line. So you might say we've been right here beside the canal from almost the very beginning."

Mr. Slover said his father was "one of six or eight brothers, some of whom went out West." Then he told a story of an inquiry he had received from Slovers in South Dakota and a "good yarn" they sent him for the information he had supplied. "At least one of them must have amounted to something on the Ohio frontier," he declared, proudly, "but all along the valley, like all the other families, we're petering out."

Another paper that had come from the Bible in the lock-tender's house told of a miraculous escape of one of the Slovers who acted as a guide for the Crawford expedition over the Muskingum and Mad rivers near "Battle Island." This Slover, who was with Jonathan Zane, Major Harrison, William Crawford, his nephew, and Major McClelland, according to the account, escaped when all the others were tortured to death by hostile Indians, nice, friendly aborigines who devised the running of the gauntlet and death by burning for the losers, with heads impaled on poles next day.

The Indians decided to burn Slover at the stake, too, and that wasn't very kind, for apparently he had come off top dog in the gauntlet competition. They tied him up and began poking at him with sharpened sticks. Then they stripped him and painted him black all over—he knew what that meant, from experience. Slover was due for a blackout. But up came a helpful storm, put out the fire, washed off some of the paint and postponed the festivities. Actually, the festivities were never resumed, for that night, naked, the Ohio Slover ran a different kind of gauntlet, on tiptoe and in the dark, to where there was a horse. He made good his getaway although the account runs that the horse dropped dead from the over-exertion.

"Well! That *is* a story," we said, and Aaron Slover put the

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paper away, proud of such a kinsman. The mill at Griggstown, he said, was directly in the path of the canal when the diggers came through. We had mentioned the ruins down at the bridge, at the other side of the little span and opposite a long building, now white in the sun and used by summer folk who have come recently to the hideaway. The ruins were those of a second mill and the long white building, now divided into several dwellings, was where the miller and his men lived.

Across from the single dwelling of whitened stone, where the man who tended the bridge used to live, is an old house that was of frame construction, originally, built after the canal came through, perhaps about 1835, according to Aaron's estimates. There was a fire there once and the place was badly damaged, along with the old store. There was another building near by, our informant declared, where they used to grind plaster, but that's all gone. And yet the crossing at the bridge is quaint and picturesque in Summer, for all the changes that must come in Wintertime.

"Over there across the meadow," Aaron pointed the direction over the canal from his house beside the lock, "there used to be a knoll where they used to burn lime. They used to bring it down from the hills in wagons. They used to work up a kind of fertilizer, too. I think it was a man named Blaney who ran the limekilns. Now they do lime on the spot and there's nothing much to it. In those old days, lime was lime."

We inquired concerning the canal bridges and their operation, inasmuch as time has locked them fast, with lock-tenders sitting idly indoors or puttering about in their gardens while canoeists, virtually the only travelers on the D. & R. these days, carry their craft around the rotting gates.

"First there was the sheer-pole bridges and later the balance bridges," Aaron Slover said. "Finally, the lift bridges came along. We worked the sheer-pole bridges with a crank. The balance bridge was the push-around. The talk got around that lifts and balances were too light for modern travel." He said the word "modern" with a sneer. "Some of the bridges were changed to lift bridges before the canal went out."

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Aaron declared that he had been at Griggstown since before '82, "from the time I knew anything, anyway." "Uncle George Hull was here," he went on, smiling. "Uncle George was a justice of the peace, a huckster and a carpet-weaver, according to the season." One could huckster, obviously, when there were fruits and vegetables to "huck" and when there were none, well, there was carpet to weave. Any time is open season for the squire's country court.

"I worked for the railroad from the time they leased the canal in 1872 until they closed it down, absolutely, in 1932," said the old lock-tender, throwing pebbles in the murky water at the bottom of the lock. We could hear Mrs. Slover bustling about the house and see her, now and then, as she looked from an open door or window, wondering why anybody would want to talk so long about the past. "There were railroads up here in those days. There was a branch that ran along the bank of the canal all the way to Bordentown, there was the Rocky Hill Branch and there was the Millstone Branch, too.

"The railroad was fighting the canal all the way, in spite of the lease. The canal would have gone out long before it did, if it hadn't been for the war, when every kind of transportation had to be used. I can remember this spur down here at the Atlantic Terra Cotta Plant—the railroad made the officials sign articles when that was put through, that they would do no more shipping by barge. A man would bargain with the boat people for shipments of wheat or whatever he had and the rates would be lower than the railroad. Then, before he'd have his stuff ready or on board, the railroad would quote a lower toll, under the figures of the barge men. Both sides put up a fight and then, when trucks came along, each of them passed out of the picture.

"Travel was handy for us fellows in the palmy days of the canal. If we wanted to take a little time and see things, we could always hail a barge and go along, at least part way. We could get a train out of Rocky Hill or one up at Millstone. Now we've got to go down to Princeton or over to New Brunswick to get started anywhere."

The last ships using the D. & R., Aaron put in, allowing his

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conversation to jump around, were gentlemen's yachts. "And with the first depression," he said, "many of the yachts were sold and most of the gentlemen stopped going places. Yes, I've seen a powerful lot of business going through here. In the 1880's plenty of coal was going by and seven freight lines were operating on the canal. Little steamers mingled with barges laden with grain, powerboats vied with mules for towing till about 1886. Then everything started downhill and the slide was permanent except for the war flurry and another during the railroad strike."

There were mule stables at Bordentown, at Trenton, at Kingston, at Ten Mile Lock and at New Brunswick. There were boarding houses for the drivers, too. Mules by the hundreds were always in evidence, company mules and mules hired out by individuals or owned by the operators of individual barges. At Griggstown and Rocky Hill, as well as at other points, there were basins, "as deep as the canal itself," Aaron declared. Down by the bridge were coal yards and weighing scales. "The scales," the descendant of the Dutch Seelooevers said, "were on the other side near the mill that's gone with all the rest. Why, I once had my picture taken in the doorway of the mill with a plug hat on!"

"Plug hat?" we gasped a little, thinking of some of those hats at Hopewell. "What was that? Sunday-go-to-meeting in Griggstown?"

"No," Aaron admitted sheepishly, "I just borrowed it from old Doc Atkins."

Then it was that the old man grew sober, lost in his reminiscences for a moment. He spoke of Doctor Abraham Beekman Mosher and we said we'd like to see him. Aaron shook his head. "Won't do," he told us. "He's eighty-five and too sick. But eighty-five's not old. Why, I've got a brother eighty-seven and he's lively as a cricket. Doc Mosher has worked too hard here in the valley."

He spoke of Uncle John Slover again and of his work in Harlingen and Griggstown in the busy days. He mentioned, too, the Van Doren farm across the road, where there is a

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monument marking the route Washington's army took to Morristown. "Old Bill Van Doren used to say the family fed Washington's officers before they marched on their way—he should have known, if anybody did!"

We agreed. There was a Christian Van Doren in Monmouth County in the late 1600's. Christian married Altje Schenck in 1723 and went to live in Middlebush. John Van Doren built a house at Millstone when it was still Somerset Court House. The Van Dorens were ardent patriots and the men were away in the militia in 1776 when a Hessian raiding party, unable to get information from Mrs. John by hanging her by the heels, were routed by John who returned as they were preparing to try hanging her by the neck. A young woman who later became Abraham Van Doren's wife not only thwarted an officer in quest of a merry evening but pounded his head to jelly with a candlestick. Look at the Van Doren house in Griggstown and another Van Doren farmstead, not far from the Dutch Reformed Church, Millstone, and you will realize that these are sturdy homes, as sturdy as the men and women who lived in them in days that are gone. Yes, Old Bill was probably right about the Griggstown house.

Aaron pointed out the old house with the well at the side of the road. "Mara Hoagland lives there," he said. "Her grandfather came here to be a schoolteacher and married Squire Veghte's daughter." He pronounced Veghte as if it were spelled Vackta. "The Squire owned half of Griggstown in those days. He was a great man, wore a plug hat most of the time and had a lot of nigger slaves. When he died he gave the girls a farm and the mills—now the old house is the only place left.

"Up a little further is the old Totten farm—they call it the Buttonwood farm now. Totten was the town wheelwright...."

Aaron got up from his chair. He wanted us to see the picture of his mother which he had pasted over an old map of New Jersey "because the map was in a good frame." "A lady in Trenton came across it in an old attic," he said, "and called

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me in to see if I knew who it might be. I knew it was my mother the minute I saw it, although I didn't know she had ever had a crayon picture done. Yes, that's the Hettie Marie I told you about."

A few minutes later Aaron had left the past to thrust himself into the present. He said he was going to close his store that night and take a few days off. He said he would go see his brother in Newport News. Somebody passed on the road along the canal. "Hey," he shouted, waving. "Did you get married today or not? Whose wedding was that I saw going down the road?" There isn't much that happens in Griggstown—or that has happened in the neighborhood in his lifetime that Aaron Slover doesn't know about, we said, amid good-byes.

Harry E. Wilson—he was most particular about the "E" because, he said, there was another Harry Wilson in the vicinity—was a very different sort than Aaron Slover. Short and stout and rosy where Aaron was tall, gaunt and angular, Harry carried his sixty-eight years as well as Aaron his seventy-two. He told us he had been at Ten Mile Lock when the commerce there demanded "three men, then two and finally, one." Just as at the other locks, there is a little shanty, in addition to the lock-keeper's house, a small frame building with a stove in the middle where the lock-tenders used to sit on night duty between barges. The shanty at Griggstown is used, these days, as a branch of the Somerset County Library.

We went inside the one at Ten Mile Lock, taking note of the old circulars on its walls, railroad regulations and other announcements. We wagered that it was cold in Winter. "No," Harry responded, "it wasn't cold at all. The stove here kept things warm, even when there was ice in the canal. Yes, many a night I've been out here—sometimes we had to do twelve hours at a stretch—and I've been right comfortable."

Explaining the uses of canal appurtenances stowed away in a corner beyond the wheels that once opened and closed the lock, especially something that looked like a clam rake with which a boy, fished from the lock long ago, rewarded

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his rescuer with an admonishment not to rip his new pants, Harry Wilson isn't comfortable now—or at least he wasn't then. The future of the canal was too uncertain for his mind to be at ease, he said.

"First they come through, going through the motions of a survey, saying that all the activity we knew is going to come back, that the barges will return and that New Jersey will have its water highway across the State once again. Then along comes another fellow who says the canal's State property now and anything can happen, with the water being pumped to Jersey City or somewhere else, they're never sure. If the D. & R. comes back, we can stay on here. If the canal's out for keeps, well, then, I'll have to move along."

Harry isn't a native to the vicinity. He came over from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Perhaps that accounts for his lack of talk about the past. To be sure he pointed out where the old telegraph station had been, used when there was need for careful regulation of traffic on the canal, as well as the mule stables on the other side. But, he said, in his slow, restful way, there's nothing showing of them now, nothing at all.

Harry seemed to have withstood a shock when, after everything on the lock had been put in readiness that year, they came and told him it was all for nothing, there wouldn't be any more business. Perhaps he's a bit over-wary lest a second shock come, when they tell him he's got to desert the house in which he "has been sleeping forty-four years."

Aaron had told us something about the copper mine but the day we found it was one when he wasn't at home. Only Mrs. Slover was there, with the announcement that Aaron, man of action that he's always been, had gone off on a country picnic across the meadow. Aaron had said something in passing about remembering an Adolph Weber who was among those who tried to reopen the mine and make it pay. Stock was sold, he said, but usually when preliminaries were accomplished and machinery installed, the initial cost of labor wiped out the revival just as it had been choked off before. An

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engineer, remembered as a Captain Webb, was recalled as having a connection with the enterprise seventy-five years ago.

Thomas Gordon has a considerable something to say about copper mines, generally, in his description of the physical underground storehouses of New Jersey, as they were known in the early 1800's, but our notes for explorations were filed mostly for country further north. "Besides the minerals already mentioned," reads the fine type on the first yellowing pages of the *Gazetteer*, "large deposits of copper ore have been discovered in this section, at Belleville, at Griggstown, near Brunswick, Woodbridge, Greenbrook, Somerville, and Pluckemin; and it would seem probable that a vein of this metal extends S.W. across the secondary region from Fort Lee." There follows an account of the mine near New Brunswick, "extracted from Morse's *Gazetteer*" by Mr. Gordon, just as we have been "extracting" for the sake of authentic data here and there from his. The "lumps of virgin copper, from five to thirty pounds weight" ploughed up in a field of Philip French, Esq., within a quarter mile of town, excited no less than Elias Boudinot to take a ninety-nine-year lease, the discoveries dating as early as 1748.

There follows a variety of inviting information on various mines and estimates of their possibilities but there is no specific reference to the mine up the Copper Mine lane from the road along the canal at Griggstown. Then is added the quaint, though painstakingly accurate description of the canals of the State, with much of it given to details of the D. & R., its seven locks, "one at Kingston, one at Griggstown, and one at the mouth of the Millstone, each of eight feet; two opposite to Boundbrook, seven feet each; one two miles below Boundbrook, of eight feet, where a dam has been constructed across the river to use it as a feeder, and one at New Brunswick, of twelve feet, lift." Seventeen culverts, "some of them very large; one aqueduct, and 29 pivot bridges" come in for their due.

Below a marginal date of 1765, Samuel Smith, describing Somerset County, divided from Middlesex in 1688, its bound-

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aries again limited in 1709, and altered again in 1713 and 1741, mentions the village of "Bound-Brook" and, after declaring that "The land is rich, and being early settled by the industrious low Dutch, and a few others, is much improved," adds that "in this County lies the Rocky-Hill mines." Other records assert that copper ore, having been discovered in the county before the Revolution, brought into being a drift, run seven hundred feet beneath First Mountain, presumably the Watchung range. The names of Augustus F. Cammann, Goold Hoyet and others are linked with the Bridgewater Company in 1821 and those of Albert, son of Augustus, and Peter I. Stryker, with the Washington Mining Company near Chimney Rock in 1835, but these operations did not reach down to Griggstown.

The Geological Survey of New Jersey for 1868, however, offers something illuminating although much remains in a fog. In a chapter on copper ores, there is a paragraph which provides the challenge that set our car to climbing up the bumpy path that turns in at the buttonwood tree bearing the fading inscription, "Copper Mine Farm." "Near Griggstown, on the western slope of Ten-mile Mountain," it says, "is the Franklin copper mine. Copper ore is said to have been raised here as early as the Revolution. After a period of forty years, it was again worked, since which there have been two or three unsuccessful attempts at mining ore. Very recently the whole thing was sold to parties as a salt mine. There is one principal shaft said to be one hundred and ninety feet deep. A tunnel running in from the base of the hill serves as a drain." An analysis by Professor Rogers follows, listing altered shale, calcite, feldspar, hornblende and other minerals in the make-up of the ore and concluding on the disappointing note that it is doubtful if the mine could be wrought with profit.

Be that as it may, summer people living at the old Copper Mine Farm declared that as recently as the first 1900's a stock company with a million shares at a dollar a share was formed with an idea of overcoming all obstacles and making a

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go of operations which had failed through the years so many times. There was a circular describing what a sure thing the undertaking was to be, they said. No more than the beginning was made, for, down at one of the entrances there used to be two cars, loaded and abandoned, at the mouth of the tunnel. The mine holes are back from the farmhouse today and virtually lost in piles of shale beside which is the last machinery installed for dropping workmen to the depths and hauling out the cars, protected by paint by the present tenants of the farm.

One shaft has been fenced around since the day when, without warning, there was a great roar and a tremendous groaning of the earth. When the dust cleared, those in the vicinity crept near enough to see that there had been a cave-in of wide proportions, taking the earth and pieces of shale back where they had come from in days when men insisted on rebuilding from the ruins to break their dreams of wealth in the Somerset hills all over again.

One day we went on to Millstone, still dominated by its lovely old Dutch Church, surrounded by the graves of pioneers, some of whom, if they did not know the village as Somerset Court House, the county seat, heard their forebears tell about it. They told us at a filling station to go over to East Millstone and see Neil Welsh, who was ninety-two and who remembered everything in the vicinity that was worth while. But Neil was too full of memories of the Civil War, but recently revived at Gettysburg. Bill Welsh, his nephew, was as disappointed as we were when Uncle Neil, somewhat annoyed at being called from his bean patch, did little more than identify the chimney down by the canal as once part of the distillery operated by Joseph and Adam Alcott, later taken over by Fleischmann's and again converted into a reclaiming plant of the Somerset Rubber Works when we were there.

Beyond the white church and all the old houses, charming in their simplicity in the cool shade of ancient trees, beyond the weather-worn tombstones of Van Nestes, Van Cleefs, Wykoffs, Staats, Van Dorens, Smocks, Van Arsdalens,

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Schencks and Schancks, grouped around such notables as the Reverend John Zabriskie, "for more than fifty years a messenger of God and pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church of Millstone," there's a little road that appears to be a short-cut to the bridge. This was the old road and beside it was the courthouse where Colonel Simcoe liberated three prisoners before applying the torch that burned it to the ground and damaged the near-by homes of Cornelius Lott and William Cocks.

Lighthorse Harry Lee called John Simcoe's raid down the Raritan Valley the "handsomest" of the war. The raiders, the Queen's American Rangers, many of them of the frame of mind of the Refugees in that they wanted more action than they were likely to get as Regulars on either side, made the most of their uniforms, convincing many along the road that they were Colonials because of similarity to the garb of Lee's followers. Simcoe, graduate of Eton and Oxford who had enlisted at nineteen as an ensign, took over command of the Rangers by his own request, set as objectives the capture of Governor Livingston, the burning of fifty flatboats to be delivered to the man the Colonel called "Mr. Washington" for a contemplated attack on New York, and anything else along the way that might be entertaining.

Simcoe, with eighty riders, sought to pillage the farms and bring the militia clattering after them so that they would know, as quickly as possible, where Major Richard Armstrong and his infantry were hidden near Perth Amboy. They bluffed and forged their way to equipment from a forage depot, took Justice Crow along from Quibbletown, insisting they were Americans, lingered at the Peter Haroending tavern in Bound Brook and daringly paused again at Frelinghuysen's inn. They considered burning Washington's abandoned army huts at Chimney Rock but on being told they had been sold as homes, they went to the Van Horne mansion near Bound Brook, seeking Governor Livingston.

Undaunted, they went down to the Van Veghten bridge at FINDERNE in quest of the flatboats but all except eighteen had

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been floated on their way—so they burned the Raritan Dutch Reformed Church, the Colonel defending his action on the grounds that the church stored war materials. On they went to Somerset Court House and once again the reflection of the flames in the sky marked their progress, with "Tory Jim" Stewart, a Somerset County man, smiling at the grim result of his work as guide. Although the Rangers had not realized it, some of them had been recognized at Frelinghuysen's and the militia led by Captain Moses Guest were on the heels of the raiders when they took a wrong road. Although the gallant Colonel was taken prisoner, his men, or most of them, escaped and the swath they cut in the night, fifty-five miles long, drew the admiration of both armies. But, as far as Millstone was concerned, it was without its courthouse and actually lost as a seat of county justice. The courthouse was burned late in 1779 and in 1784 a courthouse and jail were built of logs at Somerville, which was Raritan until about 1809.

On another day we pushed on to Weston and Zarephath, later passing through Finderne, although there was no time to see the house Derrick Van Veghten built of brick imported from Holland in 1750, as an addition to the dwelling of frame construction his father put up on the bank of the river where an even earlier member of the family settled in 1715. This was the house that served General Nathaniel Greene as a headquarters during the Revolution and where, during the festivities of a Christmas party in 1778—there was a time for parties and a time for fun—General Washington proved he didn't like dancing at all by cavorting about with Mrs. Greene for three full hours "without sitting down."

Both Aaron Slover and Harry Wilson had used the term of the countryside, unkind as it may be, speaking of "the holy jumpers" at Zarephath, headquarters of the Pillar of Fire faith. Here you will find a group of people whose beliefs are concentrated in the injunctions, "If you believe in God, let it be known," and "If you are happy, let the whole world know it." Head of the Pillar of Fire is Mrs. Alma White, only



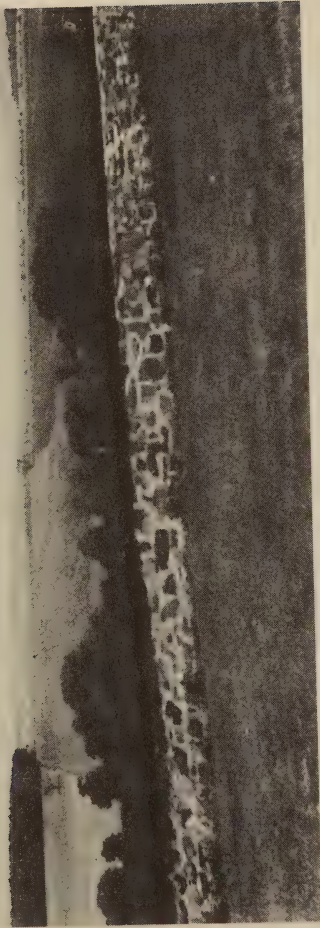
Zion is proclaimed by the Post Office these days but the postmaster remembers when the village was Rock Mills.



Once it was Greenville but now it's Reaville. The crossroads recall the days of stagecoaches coming over from Wells' Ferry through the East Amwell Valley.

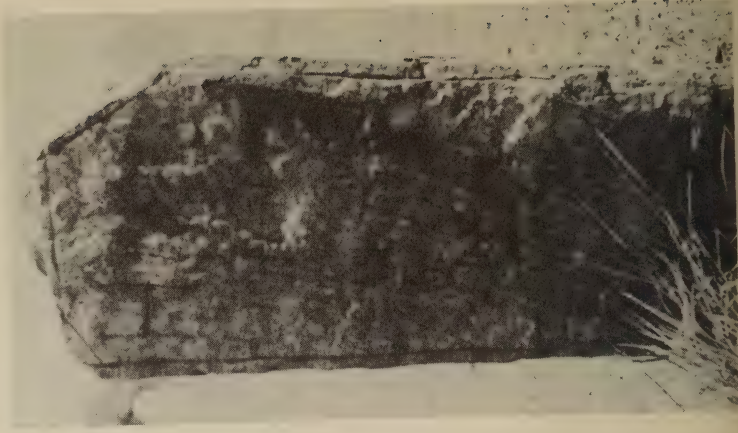


Not so far from Reaville, turned upside down, is an old kettle. Revolutionary soldiers were preparing their repast when the enemy appeared suddenly and the huge pot was abandoned.

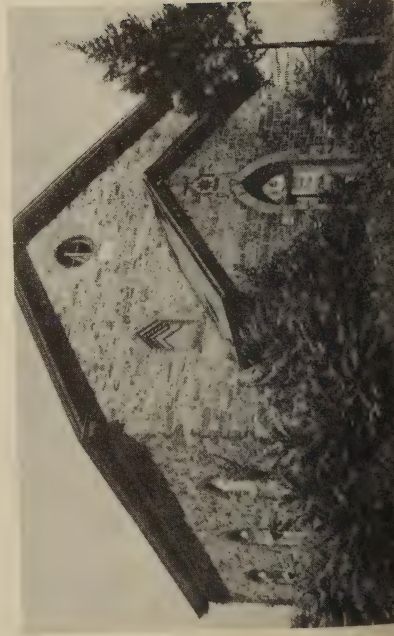


George Whitefield, the famous evangelist, looked upon these hills in 1740, as he preached to a throng of 3000 within a stone's throw of this wall. It is that of the cemetery which was once around the First Amwell Church, built in 1738.

This might seem to be a hitching post but it's a tombstone, painstakingly cut and inscribed to say, "Here lies the body of Aaron Vandorn."



This early Amwell church was used not so long ago as a chicken house. It's at Werts-ville, once Wear's Corners.



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woman bishop in the world who, no matter how she is referred to in the area, seems to be the favorite on Sunday afternoons when she preaches in the auditorium in the grove across the canal from Alma White College. She was an ardent feminist, born on a farm in Kentucky, wife of Kent White in 1887 when he was a Methodist Ministerial student in Denver. **It was only with concentration** we could hear Harry Wilson talk on one occasion when her voice was coming through the radio loudspeaker, the voice of a woman who seems to have known what she wanted, establishing missions, a college, a creed all her own in defiance of the Methodists who, she says, sought to suppress her and her ministry.

But Zarephath is a community of today and the waters of the canal flow on, reminiscent of times gone by, days of gentlemanly conflict, days of spies, copper miners and Dutchmen in the valleys of the Millstone and Raritan. The old D. & R. is a story in itself, with each turn, each lock a new and lively chapter, if you read under the lines of the present to find the romance of the past. Aaron Slover, Harry Wilson, Neil Welsh and the others have been there to remember, but when they've gone—? Perhaps the sticks and stones will talk but they will speak only to those who know the language.

Chapter 15

SHADOWS IN THE SOURLANDS

"Few, few shall part where many meet;
The snow shall be their winding-sheet;
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre."

—THOMAS CAMPBELL: 1777-1844

PERHAPS THEY are right in concluding that Eugene O'Neill won't be coming back to Zion. And, although there's talk of ghosts, it isn't likely that the phantom of George Bellows broods at midnight at the crossroads in the midland badlands of New Jersey, the Sourland Mountains, that was Rock Mills. But just the same, the tumble-down house beyond Rock Brook where George and Eugene lived in the forgotten Spring and the Winter before it in 1909 might serve them both today.

Only picnickers and a few of the curious visit the old house now. The rotting roof of the long porch is falling awry. Windows are broken and missing and doors are ajar. There's moss on the leaky roof, a roof that may be lower from all indications than the one the playwright and the artist knew when one admitted that he "did a little writing" and the other set up his easel to paint "the crookedest trees you ever saw." But in what was once the garden, now a stony expanse half choked with weeds, the phlox, the lilies, the lilacs and the iris bloom on, each in their season.

We found the phloxes adding spots of color, pink and white, to the sadness of the scene, up the fading pathway from the bridge, boasting two arches where once there were three in days when the mills were going, before the big freshet came. We found the apple trees behind the house laden with fruit among the newer cedars that have been marching down the hill. Beyond the blackberry canes the brook continued its gurgling song, a bit uncertainly perhaps, but valiant in loneliness, like all the rest. The rooms of the house were

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hollow and damp, the plaster falling from the walls beside hearths with mantels still surprisingly intact.

"Yes," said Edgar Durling, the postmaster, "Gene should come back and see the old house now. It's sort of like his plays, isn't it?"

When we saw Mr. Durling for the first time, that day we urged the car up the rocky steep from Neshanic, he was cautious of inquiries. Afterwards he said he thought he knew us, that he remembered us from long ago. Our questions, he said, seemed silly, and he thought we were ribbing him. Then, when he was certain that no wanderer had returned, in the way he longed for the O'Neills, father and son, to return, he said that Zion had owned no special importance in the past unless—well, there was that old house across the brook. "Eugene O'Neill and George Bellows lived there once," he said simply.

It may have been our acquaintance with Miss Susan and Miss Eleanor that stood us in good stead. For, we learned after we had gone away, Mrs. Durling had been visiting them in Hopewell that afternoon we were in Zion. They said we had been poking about in Hopewell and would probably come poking into the Sourlands and surely somebody ought to tell the story of Rock Mills. What the Weart sisters may not have remembered was that they were the first to mention Zion, referring to it as a remote place to which they had seemingly urged the most troublesome when Hopewell was full of reporters.

So, after I had written to Mr. Durling, appending question after question, he emerged from the post office on another day, a sunny September afternoon. Somehow, as we talked, there in the shade of the post office which surely is the only important building at the corner, the scenes recalled were very real. Goldenrod and wild asters bloomed over the way, beside the orchard clearing hemmed in by stony ridges capped trees and brambles. Beside us was a tall, sturdy elm, crowding the house. Above, weather-beaten but proud of its proclamation, was the little oblong sign, "Zion Postoffice."

"How long was it Rock Mills?" repeated the postmaster,

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in a way that revealed him the schoolmaster he had been. "I don't know. I can remember my grandfather talking of it as it was as early as 1825—and then it was Rock Mills. It must have been Rock Mills long before and it was Rock Mills till 1898." Suddenly he pulled from his pocket an old letter, the last that was received before the name was changed. The postmark was Rock Mills and the date January 10, 1898.

"The postal authorities were doing away with double names," Edgar Durling went on. "They said there had to be a new name. Of course, the mills were gone and the name, Rock Mills, was without meaning any more. And there was nothing very much left—except the Mount Zion Church just up the road. So they changed the name of the town to Zion, just like that."

The church is a solid-looking stone structure bearing the date of 1843. A Methodist minister with Neshanic and Center-ville churches in his charge comes over for services each Sunday afternoon.

The name of a village like that of the township, Amwell, before they divided it into East and West Amwell, was still carried on some modern maps and we pointed it out, about a mile west of Zion. In comparison, we said, Zion was a metropolis.

"Why, there was a post office there in 1886," Mr. Durling startled us by saying. The point is that even if you're going along at the slow gait the road demands, you may miss Amwell altogether. "There was mail three times a week, Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays."

Although Amwell is shown today on the Somerset County side, the post office was in Hunterdon. Mr. Durling's father, W. C. Durling, had been postmaster at Amwell before coming over to Zion for the first time. In 1896, no one could be found to take the job at Amwell. "So my father took it back," Edgar Durling remembered, with a smile.

The postal service was given up forever on December 31, 1900. Mr. Durling had a list of the Amwell postmasters handy and said they should be remembered. First there was J. N.

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Craft, then Cyrus DeCamp. Next, Mr. Durling's father was in charge, and after him, George F. Smith. "My father died in 1916 and on April 7, 1917, I was appointed—and I've been postmaster ever since," said the man on the steps, clearly a stickler for dates.

One of us recalled that claims were made that the late John N. Van Sant, of Blawenburg, not far across the hills, had been the oldest postmaster in the United States but someone else spoke up to say the distinction had been disputed. Making a note of that and of the postmaster's assertion that Mr. Van Sant had a sister still living in the neighborhood, we recalled that the suggestion had been made that there was once a town called Cat Tail in the Sourlands.

We had come upon an old stone bridge, on the trail to Montgomery, not far from Zion, with a stone inscribed with the names of builder, directors and masons. "Cat-Tail Bridge," it read, with the date, 1825, topping "Built by B. G. Gray, directed by R. S. Stryker and M. J. Cruser—John Cromlin, Thomas Stout, masons."

"I don't think there was a town called Cat Tail here," Mr. Durling said. "The bridge was probably named for the Cat-Tail Brook over which it was built."

Then the conversation turned to the O'Neills and George Bellows.

"Gene was a jolly sort of boy, as I remember him," the postmaster recalled. "He was about nineteen or twenty when he was here that Winter and Spring of 1909. He used to laugh about being thrown out of every hotel down around Trenton—but I don't know about that. I asked him once, when he was here in the post office, 'Gene,' I said, 'what do you do, anyhow?' And he answered, 'Oh, I try a little writing—but I wouldn't tell anybody.'"

"Gene's father, James, was the famous actor, you know. He played countless performances of *The Count of Monte Cristo* as no one played it before or since. When he'd come up to the post office to talk to Father and the rest of us, he'd put all his dramatics in whatever little story he had to tell. He'd

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always have some liquor with him in a leather flask and he'd always invite everybody to have a little drink with him.

"The way he got that house, up from the brook, was taking a mortgage from some theater people. Melton, I think their name was. Later, he took over the property and came up here, at least once a year, to pay the taxes and have a look around. James O'Neill never stayed here, as far as I can remember, but when he came on a visit he made a dramatic impression on all of us. Ever see *The Count of Monte Cristo*? Quite some swordplay in that piece!" Then after a pause: "Gene's plays are quite the thing, aren't they?"

Paul Niemeyer, who had come up from the Trenton museum that day, asked the postmaster if he had ever seen any of the O'Neill dramas. "No," said Mr. Durling, a little wistfully, "we're a little far from a theater here, you know. But," he brightened perceptibly, "I've heard a couple of them on the radio." Paul said he was sure that neither was *Desire Under the Elms*.

After Eugene was at Zion, he ran away and went to sea. Once when James was there, we were told, he said he "didn't know where the boy was." That time he just went down to look at the old house that went back to the 1760's anyway, from all accounts.

"I don't know if George used to have the house in any of his pictures or not," said Mr. Durling, "but he often did the falls." Presumably he meant the trickle of water that dribbled over the rocks at the bottom of the forsaken garden.

"That was before he went to England and got famous and started painting prizefighters. I've seen him out there in the road with his easel even when there was snow on the ground. I used to think he painted the crookedest trees I ever saw. But that was a painter's license, I suppose, just like a poet's."

Once at Rock Mills and in the shale ridges all about were timber mills. One of the mills down by the brook was where shafts were bent for wagons. Those, said the postmaster, were the horse-and-buggy days in the Sourlands. "They used wagons even to take the children to school," he pointed out.

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"They still do," we said.

That called for an explanation. We recalled that when we paused at Wertsville, coming over from Reaville, we had found at last the "stagecoach" that had eluded us for so long. Alden Cottrell had sworn that coming across the mountains one day, he had seen the oddest sort of carryall, a vehicle which seemed to have rumbled out of the past. He had to groan along at ten miles an hour, he said, because the "stage" couldn't turn out in the narrow pass and there was no room to drive around it. On the morning of the day we talked with Edgar Durling, Alden revealed that he had spotted the "coach" again, in the yard behind Louis Stein's store.

"Why, we were there, talking to Mr. Stein only a week ago," we said. We had been keeping eyes peeled for the phantom stagecoach, beginning to doubt its reality, but naturally it had not occurred to us that the vehicle was in Wertsville.

"But we saw it this morning," we told Mr. Durling. "It wasn't exactly as we expected it to be but it's there all right. They've got it up behind a barn, half concealed by a huge pile of wood. It's like a large wagon, covered all over, with steps on the side, steps out the back and an outside brake. Mrs. Stein told us they use a regular school bus for the children now but when there's a heavy snow, Mr. Stein gets the horses out and hitches them to the 'stagecoach' and they get through all right."

This was the carryall used to take children to school long before buses were thought of. Once in a while, you see, the present gives up and the past has to save its face.

"Perhaps," we ventured, "that was the Boozer school they talk about."

"Yes," Mr. Durling replied, and that would have been all.

"Miss Susan said you used to teach school. Where did you teach?"

"The Boozer school," came the calm reply.

We had heard that there was a way to the Roaring Rocks and Fort Hans, another historic formation, from the Boozer

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school. We confessed there and then to the postmaster that we had passed over the Zion-Neshanic trail several times, hunting the school without finding it. Mr. Durling smiled and said the school had been closed long ago and that somebody had bought it for a house, moving it across the way.

"It would be hard to recognize now," he confided. We wondered about the name, Boozer, debating its inebriate implications. "Nothing like that," the former schoolmaster shook his head. "Boozer was the original schoolmaster there, they say."

Edgar Durling expressed uncertainty that Wertsville was ever Weart's Corners. But we pointed out that in the historical sketch of the Baptist Church in Flemington, contributed by the Reverend Charles Bartolette for the compilers of *Historical Collections* in 1847, there was a specific reference to Weart's Corners. Recalling the trials and courage of zealous Baptists of the neighborhood from 1765 on, the pastor, called to Flemington in 1812, wrote:

"The number of communicants at this time, and for several years, was about 70; but after this they began to increase, and in 1817, built the meeting-house on Sandy Ridge, of stone, 30 feet by 40, two stories. In 1818, they set off 14 members, who were constituted into a regular Baptist Church. This was the second in Amwell. They have since set off several members, who now form the church at Weart's Corners, in Amwell. They have set off and assisted in forming several other churches in adjoining neighborhoods. . . ."

We were surprised when Mr. Durling said his wife used to go to services in the church at Wertsville. After talking with Mrs. Stein that morning and Mr. Stein on a previous visit we were still bewildered by the inscription dated 1834 on the main building, far out of proportion to the community of today, and another, dated 1884 on an entrance, adjacent to a peculiar insignia, an eight-pointed star with eight smaller five-pointed stars, set into the splitting granite addition over the keystone of the newer arch, the door itself full of the fancy didoes of the later period. The main building, we recalled,

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had been constructed of sandstone, shale and traprock. Inside there were also traces of the original and later plaster, the former still solid, the latter crumbling to the floor.

And what a floor! Someone had been using this old church, huge in its time, tremendous today in its abandonment there at a forgotten corner, as a chicken house!

Around its sagging stone steps the weeds grew tall. Through them plunged Alex Garwood the first day we were there, responding to the invitation of the yawning door and the smell of damp dust that oozed into the sunlight. A moment later he was jittery and ready for flight as a pigeon whirred toward exit over his head, its cooing soliloquy in the clammy balcony disturbed outrageously. All about was the unmistakable odor of fowl. If the air got by the glassless windows, it was of no avail.

Later, we explained to Mr. Durling, we had talked about it in the store where Mr. Stein sells almost everything. "Yes," he said, with Christian resentment that belied his extraction, "it was a shame. The people who were there raised chickies, hundreds of chickies, there in the church."

In the graveyard there were Sweeneys, Morgans, Wyckoffs, Elbertsons, Conovers and many Woolweavers, a family name we had not encountered until them. The farmhouse where the man who had tried his hand at ecclesiastical poultry had lived was empty, had been unoccupied some time. Beside it, directly across from the ancient store, was a dwelling that seemed to have been an inn and which Louis Stein identified as such. Beyond that, Mr. Stein was unable to help, saying merely that once there were more houses and so, more people in Wertsville. The abandoned church was proof of that.

Edgar Durling said he did not remember the curious insignia, had not been down in Wertsville for a long time.

"I think it was a fellow named Chapman who built the church," he recalled. "He was some kind of a mechanic—did much of the building himself."

The place, we said, seemed haunted, despite the hovering

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pigeons, the initials chalked and cut into the woodwork of the added vestibule, the unchurchly inscriptions emblazoned on the woodwork back of the empty platform and one or two graves where flags betrayed occasional patriotic attention. "Think of all the people who went to church there," we said. "What's become of them?"

"Some people didn't go there," the postmaster answered, evading the point. "They went over to the Dutch Reformed Church in Clover Hill."

"Just the same," we persisted, "there must be something to all this talk of ghosts in the Sourlands. Why, the story's around that even the O'Neill house has a haunt."

"There's plenty of talk—but no ghosts that I've ever seen," Mr. Durling declared. "The man who lived in the house here years ago was a Spiritualist, or something like that. He believed in ghosts, said they used to come and talk to him here. If there'd be a funny noise, a sudden snap or the creaking of a board, old Hawkins used to stop whatever he was saying or doing. He'd look deep into space and say, 'Oh, yes, Richard, I'll be there,' and then he'd go out in the dark. Who Richard was, we never found out, but Hawkins seemed to know."

"They told us ghosts would bother us here, that the bed-covers would be pulled off in the middle of the night. But they weren't."

Rock Mills can scarcely reveal itself in Zion. The old families, the houses of the pioneers who went to live on the mountaintop, perhaps as subjects of King George, have disappeared, for the most part, although some of them are owned and rented by week-enders who come from further upstate or New York City. To those who know the countryside that can be glimpsed from points of vantage at the edge of the tablelands, beyond the trees and boulders, rocks like hundreds of people, weirdly kneeling in the brush, it may seem strange that holiday-seekers seek out these barren corners beyond more obvious villages among the farms. And yet, the complete change is probably more restful and surely there is

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a fascination, once you feel it, as there is on the southern plains or in the pines.

"But these people know little or nothing of the town that was here," Mr. Durling maintained. "Some houses burned down, some were torn down, some just blew down. I can remember my father sitting here counting from memory seventy houses in and around the village. Nowadays, where there were a hundred families getting their mail here, there are but twenty-eight or thirty."

Here in the Sourlands, he said, the foxes find peace, rabbits raise large families and pheasants leisurely seek cover as you roll along.

Ever on the trail of a stray descendant of the Jackson Whites or still another variation of the explanation of the name, each one interesting because in the retelling of it, it has become a part of the weaving of folklore, we asked the former schoolmaster if he had ever heard of descendants of Hessians who found hideaways in the hills during and after the war in which they were not personally interested, and so felt they could quit without any great qualms.

"No," he smiled, "I never heard of any here. But just the same, I can remember mothers and fathers of the neighborhood saying, when a boy or girl had been particularly bad, 'See here, now, you Hessian you!' Perhaps that had implications, I don't know."

We moved on from Zion, leaving Rock Mills buried in the moss of former days for all its importance as a trading center with at least two mills before the Revolution, days when parcels of land were sold as "small lots" and "great lots," and times when the Misses Weart remembered talk of "getting the critters out of the woods."

We wanted to see Fort Hans and the Roaring Rocks, not only because of the tradition that has continued to envelop them, not only because of the story of John Hart and the legend of Hans Van Pelt, but also because they go back to an age, here in the Sourlands, "when glaciers scraped over Somerset." Edgar Durling warned us from trying the way

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from the transformed Boozer School and said there was "a better way" in from the old Orion Cruser farm, off the Bellemead-Blawenburg road that passes through Dutchtown and Skillman. "They will charge you a quarter to open the gate," Mr. Durling added, as if to warn any who might wish to avoid reckless expenditures. "But you'll never get through from the Boozer School way now."

So we sought out the Cruser farm but not before surrendering to an impulse to discover what manner of town Hillsboro might be, inasmuch as Hillsborough Township had been listed by Thomas Gordon as boasting possessions of Flaggstown, Millstone, Neshanic, Koughstown and Blackwells, in the Somerset of early times. The urge came as we concluded that the Amwell village which the postmaster of Zion had pointed out, was not the town of yesterday at all: the Amwell of Mr. Finley's map seemed to be on the identical spot occupied by today's Mount Airy. But somehow we took a wrong turning and, contrary to being greatly alarmed by unknown whereabouts as some people are, we took a cue from a roadside post, accepted the challenge of the name, Hillsboro.

It was well we did, for suddenly, in a deep-set crossing, with signs pointing the way to Millstone, Griggstown, Blackwell's Mills and Bellemead, we found ourselves gazing at a curious relic of forgotten days, a railroad station without tracks. Outside were wagon and carriage wheels, some of them broken, a swingle-tree and bits of this and that betraying transformation into a blacksmith shop. There were evidences, too, that the station had become a store and the name, C. W. M. Burroughs, was surrounded by placards indicating that Mr. Burroughs now varied his horseshoeing with the selling of cigars, tobacco and candy.

There was a house across the way, the only one in the immediate vicinity. But a knocking at all the doors aroused none but the family cat and a watchful cockerel. We delayed a few moments longer, with the many mysteries of the place unsolved and then were about to go on toward the Roaring Rocks Farm when a car pulled up. Mrs. Burroughs, at the

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wheel, was primarily interested in the removal of our car, blocking the way to the former smithy, now the garage, but Mr. Burroughs, a man with a limp and whitening hair and a twinkle in his eye, was delighted to talk when he found that the loiterers were hunting down stray bits of history.

"Yes," he said, "that was Hillsboro Station, sure enough. It was down back of the house there, in the fields, a depot on the Somerset Railroad. When the railroad gave up, there was the depot. I bought it for a blacksmith shop in 1888."

Just a stone's throw up the road to Bellemead was where there tracks ran across the trail and on to Millstone and there's nothing there now except a deep indentation in the field, traced here and there by lines of small trees.

"It almost wasn't Hillsboro," Mr. Burroughs declared. "They almost called it Oleander. Now, wouldn't that be pretty, Oleander?" The former blacksmith expressed his displeasure just as he said Andrew T. Vroom had done. "Andrew got the station," he explained, "for letting them lay the tracks through his farm. When they were talking up a name for the depot, the railroad people suggested Oleander. 'No, sir,' Andrew objects, 'it'll be O-lander right away. Call it after the township. Make it Hillsboro and leave off the last three letters.' So that's what it was, and is—the tracks crossed the Millstone road down there where the school used to be."

The station that became a smithy was more than that and more than a store, too. It used to be the post office with Mr. Burroughs the postmaster. Explaining that his limp was something new and the result of a tree falling down before it should have when he was chopping it a few days before, the former supervisor of mails in Hillsboro took us into the store. A corner cage of chicken wire, partly boarded up, was revealed as the former postal department. On the walls were a schedule of mails that hadn't arrived in years, a timetable of trains that ended in the Frog War, and advertisements of brands of a miscellany no longer popular, in some cases no longer made.

The storekeeper helped himself to a cigar from the show-

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case and Tyler Fogg, who was taking the pictures that day, asked him if he minded lighting it for posing. "Of course not," he said with a laugh. "This is Sunday. Although my wife says if I didn't smoke so many cigars I'd make more money."

Above the candies in the showcases, and on a shelf above more candies and cigars, we saw an array of bottles and for a moment we wondered if, in addition to being a blacksmith shop, a sweets shop and a post office, this had been an apothecary's headquarters, too. "No," answered Mr. Burroughs with another laugh, "you're wrong. Don't you know what those bottles are?" He put his question to Ty Fogg. "Why, I was a photographer myself! Did my own developing and printing right here. This was my darkroom when the store closed for the night. I had a lot of fun, too. Why, as the village blacksmith, postmaster and all the rest, I thought I was a big man twenty years ago!"

The ticket-window was still intact. So was an announcement of the Hillsboro and Montgomery Telephone Company of 1920. Around the floor were all sorts of gadgets in the process of being fixed, picture frames, a fire-extinguisher and a couple of old rush-bottom chairs. The fact that business was still going on, but on a strictly cash basis, was emphasized by several signs, "No Credit." So much of an old town, little known except by those who live around it, had been collected and preserved in the depot that went on working after the trains stopped going by, that the present seemed a little empty. "There's not so much fun now, is there?" somebody asked, as a feeler. "You said it," answered the man with the three initials, his laughter snubbing his agreement.

The Boozer School way to the Roaring Rocks may be difficult and obscure and the lane through the Cruser farm may be easier by comparison but even so it isn't exactly a broad and direct highway. Those who guard their cars from bumps and jolts may falter even as the trail descends to the farm and one concludes that harder picnickers found the journey a greater delight than those today—either that, or the trail has been washed out and grown over in recent years

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and has been deserted by those who know about it. However, as our car appeared, valiantly skirting the shale slabs and ditches, we saw two boys, the farmer's sons, detach themselves from the shadows of trees around the house and run down toward the gate that swung from one of the barns. Beyond saying that we could drive further and extending a palm for the gate-opening fee, there was nothing, neither directions nor pleasantries, to delay us there.

Perhaps a quarter of a mile beyond, respect for any car will win out and one will decide to proceed from there on foot. Already it was as if we had been driving across a rocky field with pebbly ridges when we were there. On one side was a little grove with a few rude seats and a broken table, indicating that those who had come that way recently had been few and far between or they disdained such rickety conveniences. Perhaps only a handful come now and the legends of the Roaring Rocks and Fort Hans are dying out.

The wagon track soon narrows to a footpath, climbing all the while, and one must take care with every step. There are sharp stones jutting from the red clay and then half a mile of loose shale, with the dense woods on every side. We kept to the right path chiefly because someone had hung ribbons of tissue paper on the trees at the turns to where the path followed a deep ravine, in which we could see that the boulders were becoming larger as we pushed on, ever higher, larger, closer together. Then, with a sharp twist, the way along which only an Indian could go in silence, ended among the jumble of tremendous stones.

These were the Roaring Rocks. Looking down into the yawning fissures we saw the trickling brook which, at one time, provided the cascades that made the Millstone River floods memorable. This feeble trickle had been the Roaring Brook in years gone by, providing an ominous thunder that could be heard for miles. There have been more recent storms, they told us, when echoes of that thunder were heard again, but it was difficult to associate anything like a roar with the drip heard in the darkness under the gray granite.

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Another climb is necessary to attain Fort Hans. The passing of time has changed even that name and given new implications. Presumably the same hand which slashed the name of the farm in thin white paint at the entrance had marked an arrow on one of the boulders with the inscription, "Fort Haunts," beside it. We found the "Fort" without difficulty, but with more markings, another arrow and announcement that this point is five hundred feet above sea level. As impressive as the upheaval of rocks marking the course of Roaring Brook may be, the boulders of Fort Hans, evidence of what geologists call glacial drift, the last deposit of melting ice flow, similar in composition to those found in the Canadian Rockies, are awe-inspiring.

Who was Hans? The legend identifies him as an old Dutchman who deserted the American Army to preach a doctrine of world brotherhood. Whether he was sought merely as a deserter or because his theme was in opposition to the sentiments of his neighbors is uncertain but the story goes that he remained in hiding under and in the neighborhood of the rocks until the Revolution ended. He didn't live a long while after and his bones, they say, lie buried in a field near the Skillman crossing.

Surely a man less afraid of the dark and the wild country of the Sourlands than of human persecutors could remain in safety in the hideaway of the leafy cave under the "fort" built by Nature's giants. Approach of anything or anybody could be heard from any quarter, either the Roaring Rocks below or the Balancing Rock above, brooding over the stone-studded thickets. It may be that the new spelling, "Haunts," infers that the ghost of old Hans lingers around the promontory, but we neither heard nor saw anything to confirm more than a deliberate misspelling.

As we lingered there among the ferns, before climbing down the way we had come to the gate that was opened for us with the same alacrity, this time without charge, we were thinking of poor, hunted John Hart, for it was in such a place as this in the Sourlands that he found refuge, in the conceal-



It was once a railroad station and was once provided by the line for a farmer who permitted tracks to cross his meadow. Now it's a store . . . at Hillsboro.



Mr. Burroughs who bought the abandoned railroad station to set up a store and Post Office, posed with a Sunday cigar beside the cage that once took care of the mail . . . at Hillsboro.



A jumble of stones lie in every size and direction down the steep of the Sourlands. These are still called the Roaring Rocks but there hasn't been a roar in years.



Up in the Sourlands, not far from the Roaring Rocks, is another glacial formation, known variously as Fort Hans and Fort Haunts.

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ment of a "rock house," that word came to him that his wife, Deborah, had died in Hopewell. We thought, too, of old Hans, exiled from his fellows because his doctrine of brotherhood made him a crack-pot as it would today. We thought again of Eugene O'Neill, just beginning to write, not far away on the mountain-top; of George Bellows, learning to paint by painting; and, before any of them, the Neshanock tribesmen, who knew the badlands first of all, and whose presence is remembered in the name of a Sourland village.

Chapter 16

TOWN ALIASES AGAIN: TOWARD THE DEVIL'S HALF ACRE

"'Tis but thy name that is mine enemy;
Thou art thyself. . . ."

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet . . ."

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: 1564-1616

IT WAS the last of daylight saving. The snap of the early morning soon lost itself as the warm September sun came streaming down, reassuring the asters in the garden, encouraging the chrysanthemums and striving to restore the zinnias, beaten down by five days of unceasing rain. We wondered if we had delayed our journey to Hightstown, to Cranbury, to the country of good bread and bad and on toward the Devil's Half Acre, too long.

Months had passed since the chap who had signed himself James Vandenberg, Jr., had sent his first letter from Hightstown, almost a year perhaps since we had scanned old maps and yellowing pages, pondering on New Sharon, Applegarth, Windsor, Rhode Hall and Etra, as well as many more that offered challenge from the neighborhood. We had replied, of course, saying that we'd be along one day, wishing always for more time, wondering if some way couldn't be devised to make the Summer twice as long, the Autumn an endless chain of golden days.

Then, even as we moved across the Sourlands and along the old canal, there came that night of earthquakes and, after that, the week of the hurricane, when New Jersey was first rocked in hours of darkness and then inundated at the edge of a tempest that cut a swath along the coast and through New England before spending its fury. Not that earthquakes were new in the vicinity, as some believed, or that floods of

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great devastation were without precedent. There was a 'quake in 1726, another in 1737 and still another in 1755, listed by Samuel Smith, the historian, under the heading of "remarkable occurrences." As for the rest—well, ancient descriptions of both temblors and high water made those of our experience somewhat tame.

The great shake of 1726 lacks description except where Mr. Smith confides it to have been between the hours of ten and eleven on a November night. Another, at noon September 5, 1732, similarly lacks color. However, the third he writes about is a different matter. On the night of December 7, 1737, "there was a large shock . . . accompanied with a remarkable rumbling noise; people waked in their beds, the doors flew open, bricks fell from the chimneys; the consternation was serious." The duration of the shock November 18, 1755, was placed at two minutes. There had been seven days of singularly clear weather and then came a night "of clear full moonshine." Even after the 'quake which "did not begin with so much of a rumbling noise as that of 1737, but was thought not to fall short in concussion" there were two days that "continued very clear, not a cloud to be seen till toward evening of the second day after it happened."

As for hurricanes, 1703 is recorded as an exciting year, with snow October 10 "that laid on the ground for twenty-four hours" when "the oldest people said such a thing had not before happened in their time." Eight days later a hurricane was ripping ships to sea and sinking them without trace. "Roofs of houses were torn off," "large trees were blown down," and "the storm reached England." As for freshets, the records concerning the Delaware are punctuated by them down the years, with all the bridges between Easton and Trenton torn away in 1839 and 1841. So, with history repeating, hurling the overflow of the D. & R. to meet the turbulent waters of the Millstone, washing out the back roads and crashing through even the newest foolproof dams, we chose a day to meet Jim Vandenberg.

When we met him in Hightstown, we knew we had won

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a little bet—and he was pleased to extra rosiness when we told him: We had said his letters revealed him another whose enthusiasm for old things had not waited until he approached the age of the unsung relics we hoped to find. What remained as a complete surprise was something he revealed when we were well under way—Adrian Mount, the man who mixed editing a weekly newspaper in Matawan and Keyport with some thoroughgoing climbing in family trees, was his uncle!

Jim began unrolling revelations even as we set out for Cranbury. We had concluded, after examining the old campaign maps, that Cranbury was more properly Cranberry. What we were not prepared to hear was that there was a house there in which Aaron Burr had concealed himself the night after the famous duel. The hideaway, we had been told, was in Perth Amboy but Jim said that even Adrian admitted that Perth Amboy was probably an elastic location covering considerable ground, even as Rhode Hall turned out to be. But our first attempts at trailing the legend to its lair were doomed and Jim Vandenberg was disappointed. First we went to a friend of the family who lived next-door to the famous house but silence resulted from the first show of pencil and paper, with a warning that the new owners of the farm wouldn't wish to talk about the matter either. However, with our guide insisting that the yarn concerning Hamilton's enemy was true enough, we pressed on to the office of the editor of the *Cranbury Press*. Here again we were stymied for that gentleman said the story as he had written it had all but landed him in jail.

There seems to be contradiction of the assumption that Cranbury ought to be Cranberry since it was named for the Cranberry Brook. The Reverend Joseph G. Symmes, pastor of the ancient Presbyterian Church there for many years, gave a deeper meaning to the name than many pause to know about. "The name of the fruit cranberry is of Scotch origin," he wrote. "It was called craneberry, from the real or fancied resemblance of its stem to the neck of the crane, and was modified by dropping the 'e.' It was the emblem in Scotland of

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the Grant clan. The name was undoubtedly given to the stream on which our village stands from the fact that the berries were found upon its meadows. And when applied to a stream, or meadow, or prairie, the correct name is Cranberry. But there is no reason or meaning in that spelling as applied to a town. The old English custom, which our early fathers, of course, followed, was to call a district or town a borough, which was contracted into burg or bury, according to whichever they thought sounded best. . . . When this village began to grow up the natural method was to call it Cranberry borough or town; the berry would be dropped and there would be Cranborough, or, contracting it, Cranbury."

The pastor warmed to his discussion. "And so the old documents and records which were written by those who knew how to spell or were careful in spelling," he continued, "have the name Cranbury. The origin of the name, its proper meaning, and the best authority in spelling make it Cranbury. Cranberry suggested to strangers a low, swampy, sandy country, which this is not. . . . Let us have the correct, respectable, historical spelling." Very well—let's—there is nothing more to be said.

An avalanche of name changes began piling up so that the whole vicinity seemed to be joined in a kind of historic masquerade. "They used to refer to Red Valley—you know where that is, along the old U.T.—as Glory Hole," Jim Vandenberg disclosed. "That was when there used to be a pond that was popular for outdoor baptisms. New Sharon, up the road from Cabbagetown, now New Canton, used to be just plain Sharon—and before that it was Cat-tail!"

There, then, we said, no wonder we had been unable to find New Sharon. The redoubtable Mr. Gordon had nothing to say concerning either Sharon or New Sharon. But Cat-tail! That was a feline of a different hue. Cat-tail, said the *Gazetteer*, was "a hamlet of Upper Freehold t-ship, Monmouth co., on Cat-tail creek, on the line between Middlesex and Monmouths cos., 16 miles S.W. from Freehold, and 28 S.E. from Trenton."

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Sure enough, it was still on the line, but, as we pointed out, Mercer County was on the other side now and anyhow Mr. Gordon was a little off in his directions, unless Trenton had been doing some inching up. New Sharon is due east from the capital.

It may be that some kind of a statute of limitations rules out our bringing up of the matter now but—perhaps Mr. Gordon hadn't been to Cat-tail. Certainly in his brief paragraph he made no mention of the little Methodist Church that is there, with the name of Sharon on its name-stone above the founding date of 1812. But we had been there before. It was the church that had made us pause and the graveyard behind it that made us smile, as much as one can indulge merriment in a graveyard—for here were stones marking the last earthly domain of four Pages and thirteen Storys. To be sure, there were two Coopers, but they must have tiptoed in on that literary circle, Storys whose names were William, David, Rebecca, another William, Elizabeth, Daniel, John, another Elizabeth, another John, Susan, Isaac, Mary Jane and Joseph. Just a step away were the Pages, Delia, William Augustus, Sarah Amanda and Rebecca.

No less than Thomas Gordon slipped on Cranbury and made it Cranberry when he described it in 1834 as a post-town "pleasantly situated on a level country, and light sandy soil" containing "a Presbyterian church with cupola and bell, an academy, a grist mill, 2 tanneries, 3 taverns, 2 stores and from 60 to 80 dwellings." The village, it was pointed out, was divided by the Cranberry Brook while today, Cranbury, having changed from the spelling given it by the stream inclined to fib about lowlands and marshes, has changed the brook's name to match.

These were days of blacksmiths and whitesmiths, whitesmiths who worked in lighter metals, cobblers who worked all day to complete one pair of shoes, carpenters who could build a house or do the finest of cabinetmaking, sturdy millers and storekeepers whose shelves included ozenbrigs, buckskins, wool hats, broad stamped ribands and yard-wide modes. These were days of Cranberry brook water-power, operating "the

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noted grist-mill in Cranberry" with "two stones . . . which go by water . . . well located for a country store."

Before we had begun to browse among the tombstones in the cemetery behind the Presbyterian Church which, by the time *Historical Collections* was published in 1847, had a rival in town, "also a near Presbyterian church and academy at the other end," our guide was at it again. "Wyckoff's Mills," he said, "was Wescott's Mills and before that it was Conover's Mills. Now there's no mill at all and you can just about see the mill pond. Princeton Junction used to be Sheep Wash because the farmers used to bring their sheep there when this was sheep-raising country. And Etra—!"

"What about Etra?" we wanted to know.

"That's named for a man and his initials. E. T. R. Applegate—not as complicated as it sounds, you see. Before it was Etra, it was Milford, but I guess there were too many other Milfords. Applegarth means apple orchard in Saxon—before that it was Spring Garden and before that, Red Tavern. Clarksburg used to be Elytown—don't get that mixed up with Clarksville: that was Clark's Store. Robbinsville was first Poverty Hill and later, Newtown, but you know that. Woodville, in Monmouth County—you mustn't get that mixed up with Woodsville, over in Mercer!—used to be called Little Africa, quite seriously, because it was a village founded by slaves. Jamesburg was Buckalew's Bogs. There was a Penlopen between Cranberry and Englishtown—I can't make out if Penlopen is now Manalapan or not. And, oh, yes, the first station out of Hightstown on the old U.T. was Slapjack—"

We called a halt. This was too much. Young Mr. Vanderbergh, left to dig by himself in the intervening months, had struck oil. "Give us a chance," we protested. "Let's begin at the beginning. Let's see some of these places and consider them as we go along." After all there was a limit to pencil points and notepaper. Even as we entered the gates behind the Presbyterian Church, built in 1734, in Cranbury, "settled about the year 1697 by Joseph Prickett, butcher, of Burlington," we were weighted down with transitions.

Both the lake and the cemetery at Cranbury are called for

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David Brainerd. Long after the Burlington butcher sold out to John Harrison, of Flushing, Long Island, "it was in the vicinity that David Brainerd, the pious and devoted missionary, labored for a while among the Indians. Mr. Brainerd first preached to the Indians in the woods, between Stockbridge and Albany, but without much apparent success," says the record of Barber and Howe. "He then turned his attention to the Indians at the forks of the Delaware, and at Crossweeksung and Cranberry, where his labors were attended with remarkable success."

Mr. Brainerd, whose work has been traced farther south, to Indian Mills when it was Brotherton, the first and last Indian reservation in New Jersey, is claimed by Jamesburg, too. When we were there, a somewhat weather-beaten sign at the crossroads declared that Jamesburg was named for James Johnstone, who was a settler there in 1685, although the official naming, it pointed out, did not come until 1847. The appended information was to the effect that David Brainerd's settlement was at the head of Wigwam Brook and that the Bethel Colony, a Presbyterian mission, was the scene of his labors. The tradition had been long handed down, Jim Vandenberg said, that there was an "Indian city" about a mile and a half from the village, recalling the man whom Yale expelled after a Separatist meeting.

W. Woodford Clayton, whose monumental History of Union and Middlesex Counties was lugged from the Vandenberg house in Hightstown, on loan from R. Maitland Vandenberg, of Prospect Plains, on a subsequent journey, has considerable more to say concerning these and other matters. Mr. Johnstone came from Edinburgh, he says, after the proprietors offered fifty acres of land to heads of families settling in the province, building a home "on the southeastern bank of the Manalapan, near Spottswood," and within the present borders of Monroe Township. "He soon purchased additional land, extending toward the Matchaponix, and was doubtless the first person to reclaim land in the township."

There, within touching distance, you have Manalapan, now

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more than a creek and known in an old church, an inn and a house or two on the road from Hightstown to Freehold, and Matchaponix, also a village but which, Mr. Clayton has declared, was originally in a place now marked on the map as Texas. "These streams," the historian points out, "were so named by the Indians in description of the country through which they flow as it was regarded by them, manalapan signifying a good country producing good bread, and matchaponix poor land not producing anything out of which good bread may be made."

Also among passengers from Scotland a little later on was William Davison, who "settled on a tract of land commencing about two hundred feet southeast of the residence of Isaac S. Buckelew, in Jamesburg, extending beyond Daniel R. Schenck's and including most of the land now known as the Davison tract." Names began to take on new significance for although old names of towns and streams have been changed and, too, have lost their meaning in today's generation, the old families are well known in the neighborhoods of their pioneering ancestors.

First of all, however, Mr. Brainerd must be properly remembered with all due importance. The Brainerd settlement was, according to Mr. Clayton, on the farm of Alexander Redmond. Having had some experience with his brother, John, in the Wyomissing Valley in Pennsylvania, as well as in New York, the preacher, "earnest in purpose, eloquent in speech, gracious in manner, persuasive in conversation," is pictured as "doing his work among the Indians in the primitive forests of Monroe, interested solely in their spiritual and mental development and the consequent improvement in their temporal affairs." When Redmond bought the property in 1841 the cellar holes of the old Brainerd settlement were visible, with gnarled apple trees shading some of the last hearthstones.

Facts of the life of John Brainerd refer to 1754 as a year of broken dreams for the missionary, since "Bethel, to procure which as their permanent home David Brainerd had paid the

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debts of the Indians, amounting to some ninety pounds, and aided them to clear its forests with his own labor, was now passing from their hands forever." Not long after the Scotchmen who had supported him withdrew assistance and he turned to other work. The deed affecting the land on which Bethel stood shows that in July, 1754, the Reverend John Brainerd conveyed to Peter Deremer the tract adjoining Wigwam Brook. After the missionary went to Newark in 1755, supporters agreed to give him about one hundred dollars a year to visit his Indian friends once a week, catechizing the children in an effort to keep the colony together.

Before this, however, David Brainerd was well known in Cranbury, as was William Tennent, whose remarkable career cries out for greater remembrance than can be given those interested, though casual travelers, who visit the old church above Freehold that bears his name. Something toward organization of a Presbyterian church had been effected at Cranbury by July, 1739, when the church land showed up in a transfer indicating that it had been set aside some time before.

Mr. Clayton wrote that no record had been found of the organization but concluded that its date was probably 1738 when Presbyterians and Episcopalians, who had worshiped together in the old church in what is now Monroe Township, separated. A new church was erected in 1740, standing "for forty-eight years in the old cemetery at its highest point," a place indicated today by the direction faced by the oldest stones. The name of Symmes has been connected with the earliest churches in the vicinity but the Reverend Joseph G. Symmes, writing of the early Cranbury congregation, recounted how his great-great-grandfather, the Reverend Timothy Symmes, was in attendance as a member of the Presbytery when the Reverend Charles McKnight, with whom the missionary, David Brainerd, frequently lodged at Cranbury, was installed.

The installation service was over in Allentown, with the Reverend William Tennent preaching the sermon, when "the exercise was accompanied with fasting and prayer. There

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was a contest," according to Mr. Symmes' recount, "between the two places as to where the pastor should reside." Cranbury got the decision inasmuch as James Rothead, "disposed to favor religion, and then owning the southwest section of the town . . . probably offered terms for the pastor's residence . . . which decided his remaining in Cranberry." David Brainerd lodged with Mr. McKnight several times, according to old accounts, previous to the time when he "could not attend with the committee to install Mr. Hunter, because he was absent marrying a wife."

The jolly old row as to who ought to have the honor of claiming Pastor McKnight as resident preacher gained in vehemence with the arrival of Mrs. McKnight so that in 1748 a committee was appointed by the Presbytery to give the nod to either Allentown or Cranbury. John Brainerd was on the committee which sat solemnly and after hearing Mr. Tennent from the pulpit, decided that Mr. McKnight should stay in Cranbury and Allentown should find its own pastor as soon as possible. Years later, however, both churches were being served in the same old way and Mr. McKnight, after "many trials" in Cranbury, went to Allentown to live. He left Allentown in 1766 and continued his work at Shrewsbury, at the old church adjoining the burial ground behind Old Christ Church, and at Middletown Point, now Keyport.

There was never any doubt, apparently, where Mr. McKnight stood in any controversy for, during the Revolution, his church was burned and he was seized by the British. However, as we pointed out to our guide later, we were wandering off to facts already well known.

David Brainerd kept a journal and his entries indicate that he gauged his success by the immediate reaction of his hearers. Just as the authors of children's books in later years seem to have set out to do, and as many of the preachers of the times admittedly intended, he frightened many of his hearers into a realization of their sins and the immediate need, at least as long as his eye was upon them, of turning over a new leaf. Under August 8, 1744, he wrote:

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"In the afternoon I preached to the Indians; their number was now about sixty-five persons, men, women and children. . . . There was much concern among them while I was discoursing publicly; but afterward, when I spoke to one and another more particularly, whom I perceived under great concern, the power of God seemed to descend upon the assembly 'like a rushing mighty wind,' and with an astonishing energy bore down all before it. I stood amazed at the influence that seized the audience almost universally. . . . Almost all persons, of all ages, were bowed down together, and scarce one was able to withstand the shock of the surprising operation. Old men and women, who had been drunken wretches for many years, and some little children, not more than six or seven years of age, appeared in distress. . . ."

Mr. Brainerd, who was licensed that same year by the Association of Ministers at Danbury, Connecticut, and who was appointed missionary to the Indians in New York by the Correspondents of the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, measures his progress time and again as he takes note of the immediate resource of his hearers to prayer, tears, mourning and varying forms of abjection causing "the persons to cry out in anguish of soul, although I spoke not a word of terror." Perhaps the effects can go down to his manner of preaching. One has only to glance through the *Memoirs of Whitefield* to know the preachers who, in wearing themselves down in all sorts of emotional frenzy in their manner of address, achieved as many kinds of hysteria among their hearers.

When George Whitefield was on his way from Philadelphia, preaching "at Elizabethtown, Maidenhead, Abington, Neshaminy, Burlington and New Brunswick, in New Jersey, to some thousands gathered from various parts, among whom there had been a considerable awakening, by the instrumentality of a Mr. Frelinghuysen, a Dutch minister," according to the *Memoirs* of the Reverend John Gillies, also influential were "the Messrs. Tennents, Blair and Rowland." We were to hear all kinds of anecdotes about the Tennents later on but one to be found here concerning Pastor Rowland serves as an index to some of the preaching of the times.

"This truly pious and eloquent man," (says the footnote of Mr. Gillies' book, published in Middletown in 1837,) "being invited to preach in the

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Baptist church, proclaimed the terrors of the divine law with such energy to those whose souls were already sinking under them, that a few fainted away. On this occasion, however, his error was publicly corrected by the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, who, standing at the foot of the pulpit, and seeing the effect produced on the assembly, interrupted and arrested the preacher by this address: 'Brother Rowland, is there no balm in Gilead?—Is there no physician there?' Mr. Rowland, on this, changed immediately the terror of his address, and sought to direct to the Savior those who were overwhelmed with a sense of their guilt: but, before this had taken place, numbers were carried out of the church in a state of insensibility."

Although the historians say that Mr. Brainerd's preaching didn't make much of a dent on the Indians up New York way, it would seem that he didn't waste much time with those who turned deaf ears. For it was in 1744 that he was ordained by the Presbytery of New York in Newark and it was in the same year that the entries of his journal indicate great success. In the midlands of New Jersey, David Brainerd is rated even more importantly among those to whom the name means anything at all: The tradition has been handed down that friends of David and his brother, John, angered by Yale's refusal of an apology for the activities that caused his expulsion, established the College of New Jersey, later Princeton, to compete with the earlier university. The fact that the first three presidents of Princeton were close personal friends is offered as substantiation.

In three years David had worn himself out and, forced to his bed by tuberculosis, died at the home of Jonathan Edwards in Northampton, Massachusetts, where he had become the fiancé of the Reverend Jonathan's daughter, Jerusha. John Brainerd, appointed to replace him in the field in and around Cranbury, found the Bethel Colony flourishing. "It pleased the Lord greatly to smile on my brother's endeavors," he wrote. "The Indians had settled themselves on a tract of land near Cranberry, far better than Crossweeksung for cultivation and more commodious for such a number as were now gathered together." Today the gristmill, blacksmiths, distilleries, spice mills and even the tanners and hatters may be gone, but a placid lake and an historic burial ground recall a

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rousing evangelist who knew the midlands in earliest times.

We were surprised when our guide confided that he had not spent much time in the old cemetery behind the beautiful church—not the original building, of course, as the direction faced by the older stones will suggest, but a beautiful structure nevertheless. "What would people think," he asked, "if I should stop the car and say, 'Wait here a moment, will you? I want to look around this cemetery.'?" We told him that many a chapter of forgotten history is passed up by those who wonder what people will say about those who linger among the tombstones. Soon the point was being proven better than could have been expected by the inscriptions under the Griggs, Perrines, Wicoffs, Mounts, Stultses, Applegates, Pettes, Rues, Probascos, Voorhees, Barricklos, Barkalows, Buckelews and other names upon the white, gray and brownstone markers.

Many Selovers were there, reminding us of what Aaron Slover had said concerning his ancestors, originally Seeloooveers. Families had changed their names almost as drastically in less than generations on graves that were side by side. One man died a Patten and his wife, by the time of her death a few years after in 1798, had become a Patton. Reids had become Reeds, Applegets had shifted to Applegates, Bleans had turned Blanes. Disbrows showed variety in Disberows and Disboroughs. Even the Perrines, whose family like many others is still prominent in the locality, showed an early Prine. Not all the variations can be blamed on stonecutters uncertain in their spelling.

Early poets seem to have had a field day preparing rhymes, embellishing memorials to agree or disagree with the grimaces of skulls or the pouting of periwigged angels above them. Perhaps the most dismal of the lot is that chosen for Humphery Mount, an elder of the Presbyterian congregation, buried under a stone brought from Woodbridge:

"From this cold bed of humid clay
Reader to you I cry:
Your time is short, make no delay,
Prepare, prepare to die."

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"Nice, cheerful fellow," we observed to our guide, as we passed to another. This was an accompaniment to the indecision of Patten and Patton and read:

"Here lies that true & loveing b^ride
Who livd belovd, lamented die^d
Who now is gon, we hope to rest
Among y^e angles & y^e just."

"Well," said Jim Vandenbergh, "there's more than one way of making the lines fit."

"Of course," we admitted, "that may have been it but—there's as much argument for the conclusion that this was beginner's bad luck or rather, that the stonecutter couldn't keep his mind on his work. Leave a letter out here, another there, what odds? Just go back and put a little letter up top, sort of on the sly. An angel from any angle is an angel!"

Next came an example of a rhymester who indicated that he had begun to do things about poetic license and then changed his mind. On the stone of Margaret Rue, who died in 1804, he chiseled:

"Here lies my body in the dust
Til God shall bid it raise
To dwell forever with the gust
Beyond the ethereal skeys."

Why couldn't the fellow use "rise" and so stick to the ordinary spelling of "skies"? Skeys! That was one to go with "Here Lighs" in the Amwell graveyard! As for "gust"—well, the poor man slipped badly there—or did he? Jail was being spelled gaol in 1804. At the same time, it was hardly decent to consign Margaret permanently to a gale of wind as that "g" for a "j" seems to have done.

Beyond another row where the Cowenhowens had become Covenhovens and later on Conovers, William died in 1803 a Covenhoven while his wife, passing in 1807, was the wife of William Cownover, according to the adjacent stone. It was Jim who read aloud another little verse, pausing to ask how "cordial" a tear could be and if a "grate reward" might not have something to do with a fiery furnace. For the sake of

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John Davison, whose stone was dated 1810, we hope there was no such implication:

"My faithfull spouse & child so deere
Come heather, shed the cordial tear
Then quickly turne unto the Lord
And strive t'ensure the grate reward."

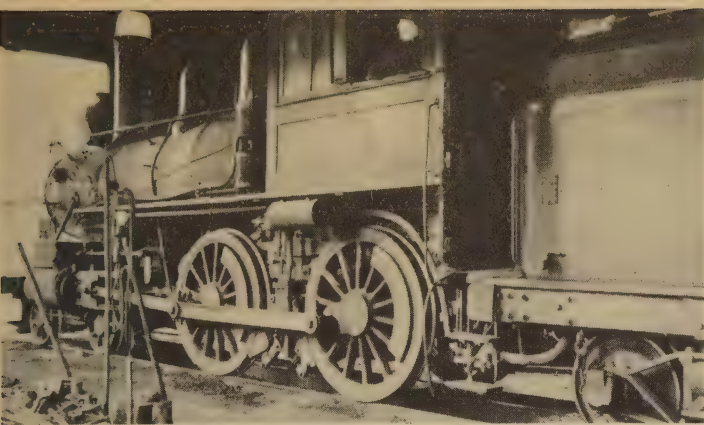
There are many famous pioneers in Brainerd Cemetery, some whose importance is revealed in the inscriptions graven in the stones, others who perhaps were quite as outstanding in their day but whose modesty was respected by their relatives and friends. Among them are many pastors who served the church in years that are all but forgotten, even in Cranbury, jurists of early courts, and even the traveling man who achieved undying fame by falling to his death from a stage-coach near by:

"Here lies the body of William Christie
A native of Scotland and late
merchant of Philadelphia who was
cut off in the flower of his youth
by falling from the stagecoach near
Cranberry 14 October 1796 and
was killed on the spot."

Catharine Sillcock, whose family later added an "s" to become Sillcocks, has on her grave a rhyme with a sinister last line, addressed presumably to her bereft husband and children:

"Deare partner of my life
And children who I love
Remember dying strife
What you have got to prove."

We could not continue our way beyond the graves of the Reverend Gilbert Tennent Snowden, A.M. and Mrs. Mary Snowden, whose vaults seemed to be in need of attention, or beyond the stone of Robert Barclay, pushed askew by a giant maple, or on over the Embleys, Purdys, Storeys and Stultses, without having the couplet of Jonathan Combs halt us among still more pastors. Jonathan interrupted our contemplation of what the church known to the Reverend Symmes C. Henry



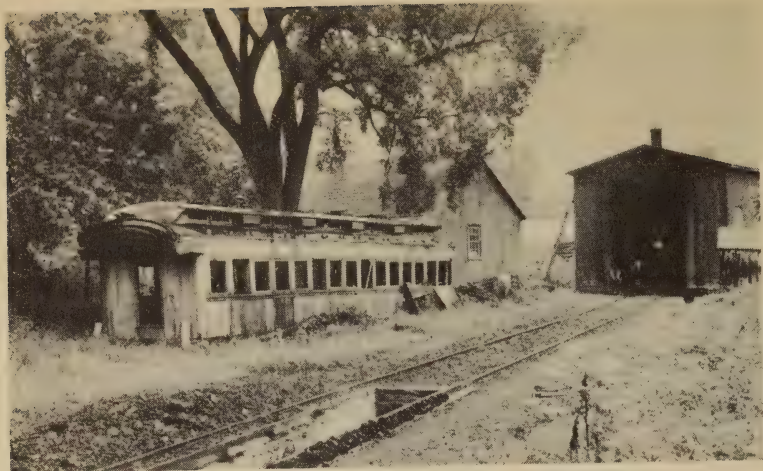
Idling in its shed at New Egypt, old Number Six, of the revived U.T., is ready for the first three runs of the week.



Dreary in Summer rain, awaiting the return of Winter because she can hold a snow plow, old Number Seven of the Union Transportation Company.



This engine was forsaken on a siding near desolate Pasadena. Years later, it turned up near Juliustown, consigned to limbo all over again.



Here's a car of the old U. T. that won't come back, but ancient Number Six is in the shed, fires up and ready for a run.



Just a few feet from the more modern track of the Pennsylvania line near Jamesburg, once West's Turnout, is a section of the rails of the older Camden & Amboy.

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or the Reverend Thomas Smith must have been like with his original twist on the customary dolorous urge to remember, at all times, that "in the midst of life, we are in death":

"Four score and more I did surmount,
This time was short in God's account.
Death's summons came and says Away,
Which awful call all must obey."

An imposing shaft in the plot assigned to the Cooks was erected in memory of Major General William Cook and the description of his activities quickly turned our thoughts to railroads. For the General was engineer of every worth-while railroad in his day and served as consultant on others far from home. Listed on the monument as roads and branches he supervised are the Camden & Amboy, the Philadelphia & Trenton, the Freehold & Jamesburg Agricultural, the Burlington & Mount Holly, the West Jersey, the Salem, the Cape May & Millville, the Long Branch & Seashore, and the Pemberton & Hightstown. Graduated with honors at West Point in 1822, General Cook was with the national survey until 1830 and then served the Gibson and Grand Gulf Railroad in Mississippi on a leave of absence from his New Jersey railroad connections.

Jim chose that moment to say that he had heard that somewhere near Jamesburg there was a section of the old Camden & Amboy track. It may be that the collectors of data on old railroads and natives of the area have known it was there but even our guide confessed he had not seen it. We made inquiries later at the Jamesburg station, just after the last steam train made its way toward Bordentown, to be replaced, they said, by gasoline cars from that day on. Yes, the agent said, the track was there, above the next crossing—or below, as you prefer. We found it without difficulty, perhaps fifty or seventy-five yards of rusted, spindly rails, resting on rocks instead of wooden ties like the single line beyond it and the half-concealing weeds. Railroad authorities had placed a typical red and gold sign, authenticating the Camden & Amboy relic, adding the construction date, 1831, and inferring the

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hope that wanderers would gaze in awe and go their way. Unfortunately there had been wanderers, evidently, who had gone their way with spikes and a rail or two.

Blame the late General Cook for sidetracking us to railroads but, as we told Jim Vandenberg, we had decided long ago that we must be more than particular where discoveries concerning old forgotten transportation companies were concerned. For shortly after we had said that the old U.T., the Union Transportation Company, had died, a number of railroadiacs wrote their protests, saying the line wasn't dead at all. We temporized at the time, saying that we had reported the declarations of the countryside and that probably the abandonment of passenger service was what had been meant.

William Schopp, of Riverton, wrote that contrary to the assertions that "the Union Transportation Company existeth no longer" he had seen it the previous morning. "Last Spring I snapped a picture of their locomotive, Number Seven, under steam at Hightstown," he said. "Last June, in the company of a few hundred other nuts, I went on an excursion over the line. It was only a part, but an enjoyable part, of an excursion off the beaten track that took us over the Rocky Hill Branch of the Pennsy, once the Rocky Hill Railroad and Transportation Company, the Amboy line and then the U.T. At Hightstown the freight locomotive that had been pulling us was taken off and onto the front of our train of eight day-coaches was coupled the U.T. power old Number Six and old Number Seven, both under full steam, pulled those eight coaches from Hightstown to Lewistown.

"It had been raining," our correspondent continued. "Going up the Cream Ridge grade we slowed, and then slowed some more. One engine wasn't working. Then we stopped. Half the passengers ran up front to take pictures of the engine. Number Six, the head engine, was the deadhead. The fireman was out on the running board, beating the side of the boiler with a sledge, trying to get the sand to run through the pipes. Then, one day, from the fireman at the Trenton Station who, on the day before had been assigned to

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a train on the Kinkora Branch, I learned that the U.T. operated Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays."

That was written in January, 1938. More than half a year after we found out the line was still operating—Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On a Sunday just a week or so before going to Hightstown and Cranbury, we chanced upon good fortune in New Egypt, finding old Number Seven in a shed that resembled a blacksmith shop and Number Six on a siding near an old-fashioned turntable. Better still, we had come upon the engineer, George Inman, at the inn across the road.

Number Seven, George said, was a Burnham-Williams of the vintage of 1919 while Number Six dated back to 1908. "I can remember Number Four, Number Five and Number Six on the U.T.," he declared. "We use Number Six in Summer because the snowplow fits Number Seven."

The engineer gave credence to our conclusion that there had been a time when the old road, perhaps the very Pemberton and Hightstown listed on General Cook's monument, wasn't operating. He said that might have been somewhere between 1925 and 1930. "But now," he added proudly, "we've got plenty of work now. Plenty of work for three days on the train, that is—you see, we're all on the road the other three days, mending track and fixing things up generally. There's a good deal more freight than there was—and there's plenty doing at Camp Dix to keep us going for a long while."

Out at the edge of the woods near New Egypt we found the last passenger coaches rotting apart. A metal shed with a formidable lock concealed a homemade handcar, made from an old Ford. That same day, passing at Juliustown, we had satisfied our curiosity concerning a little engine fast in the weeds almost in the front yard of Joseph M. McElven, an oil dealer. The proprietor didn't know much about Julius-town, he said, but what he said convinced us, with a jolt, that this was old Number One, last seen where it had been junked, apparently, at the abandoned siding of the Central Railroad at Pasadena. To those for whom there are added thrills in

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old engines and half-forgotten railroads, here are—or were—some museum pieces!

We apologized to Jim Vandenberg for all this ruminating. He had been standing there, listening, much too politely, in the shadow of General Cook's monument. Such a personality and the sight of the old Camden & Amboy track had buried our plan to debate James Buckalew or James Johnstone as the namesake of Jamesburg and—had drawn us away from The Devil's Half Acre!

Chapter 17

STILL MORE ALIASES: RED TAVERN NEIGHBORHOODS

"It may be strange—yet who would change
Time's course to slower speeding,
When one by one our friends have gone
And left our bosoms bleeding?"

—THOMAS CAMPBELL: 1777-1844

IT ISN'T FAIR to assign the charm of Cranberry, or even Cranbury, to a place among Forgotten Towns. Yet, there is much about the older village that is in danger of slipping from memory. To be sure, many of the tombstones in the oldest cemetery there serve to recall the men and women who stood head and shoulders over their pioneer neighbors but in so many cases only the families living in the neighborhood know the priceless legends of turbulent, hard-working times.

Consider the case of Rhode Hall. It is still a spot on the map, sure enough. But, on the spot, not many know about it and some, while they will tell you many things, never infer that instead of a town, it is a neighborhood, just like Matchaponix or even the vicinity known as Texas.

When we pushed on to Rhode Hall, rousing a man from his dinner, perhaps in the thought that we had come in response to the sign that hung across the fence among trees that shaded his grand old house, we had to confess, through absurd questions maybe, that we were not interested in lots for sale. H. C. Brown, whose name appeared on the sign, assured us that while the name of Rhode Hall matched the house itself, it really ought to have died with the passing of the inn on the opposite corner.

"The proprietor's name was Rhode," said Mr. Brown. "He was an Englishman. They took down the tavern long ago. See that house up the road? Parts of the inn were used to build it. No, Rhode Hall hasn't been here for years—but it

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was a famous stop when this was known as the Federal Road."

"Federal Road?" We wondered if there could be some connection between "Rhode" and "road." Once again we had come upon the name unexpectedly, just as we were to do again at Applegarth. "Well," said Mr. Brown, casually, "this was the main road from Little Washington to Big Washington. Doesn't look very important now but that's what it was."

"Little Washington?"

"That's right. Little Washington is South River now."

He was right. Mr. Finley's map shows Washington north of Spotswood. The "Little" had been added, no doubt, in years of usage. The Federal Road was a road from Amboy to Burlington, part of the chief stage route between Philadelphia and New York, with Cranbury marked as a stop in the early 1700's. Later on, the coaches were stopping at the Half Way House and at Red Tavern. But—Half Way House was the inn Mr. Brown spoke about at Rhode Hall and Red Tavern, we were soon to discover, had been lost in Applegarth.

King George's Road brought travelers on their way to New England and the South, with John Predmore setting up a post house where food, drink, fresh horses and new drivers could be had, at Cranbury. What bus lines today call comfort stops should have been full of meaning in the old days, for the bumps and lurches of the roads that are even bumpier now, required, of necessity, time out at Cranbury, Rhode Hall, Red Tavern and an inn at Spotswood. Subsequent to 1707, when Mr. Dellaman's stage began traveling between Burlington and Amboy on a fortnightly schedule, there was a coach road through Old Church that led to the Willow Tree Tavern at Clarksburg before the trail forked inland and shoreward.

First of all, however, we had to find out something more of Mr. Brown's Englishman. The nucleus of Rhode Hall was unquestionably the Half Way House "which was often the scene of much activity in the old staging days, and was first kept by David Williamson, who gave the locality its name." Perhaps Mr. Williamson was an Englishman. Apparently there

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was no one named Rhode and no tavern with such a distinguished name as Rhode Hall. Probably Mr. Williamson brought the name with him from some favorite manor house in the homeland.

Rhode Hall was a neighborhood with a tavern as its center of activity long before Monroe Township, named for a President and marking its centenary in 1938, came into being. Thomas McDowell succeeded Mr. Williamson as minehost in 1774 and he in turn was succeeded by a father and son, Simmons and John Smock. Mr. Clayton made mention of "a racecourse, known as the Rhode Hall Driving Park" but we could find no trace of it. While wandering about, however, wondering if we'd have as much luck as that which attended us when we came upon the track at Collier's Mills, we came upon what remains of a place called Fresh Ponds.

It was a bleak day, the kind of a day that went well with what we were to learn about Fresh Ponds. We saw no ponds but at a hidden corner we halted long enough to accost an aged lady making her way from the barn behind a house that stood across from a closed church and tiny burying ground.

"Is this a school and meeting house?" we asked.

The lady shrugged.

"What's the name of this town?" we persisted. Again there was a shrug.

"We're looking for the Rhode Hall racecourse," we said, as loudly as we could. The woman smiled and turning her back, went into the house. She was stone deaf.

Further on, we came upon two men with shovels. We addressed ourselves to one. He shrugged, just as the woman had. We took inventory of our questions, thinking that perhaps something was wrong with them. No, they sounded ordinary, too elementary if anything. Finally the man with the shaking head turned to his partner with a gesture. The second man smiled and pointed. "Fresh Ponds," he said at last.

Mr. Clayton listed Fresh Ponds as a hamlet of a dozen houses, a church, and a schoolhouse, "known variously as Pigeon Swamp, Woodville, Woodside, and Fresh Ponds."

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Such an area! We didn't blame those we questioned half as much. It was a wonder they could remember at all. "It has been long called Fresh Ponds," we learned further, "on account of the proximity in former years of several marshy ponds, known collectively as 'Pigeon Swamp,' since partially drained by an improvement called the 'Great Ditch.'"

Rhode Hall may be a neighborhood but it still has the pioneering spirit of old. Not so long ago some writers doing research for the centenary of the township recorded that Mrs. Courtney Brown had learned enough through New Jersey College of Agriculture extension classes at Rhode Hall to develop a marketable floor polish, profits from which put her son through college, and later began canning tomato juice, sending more than four thousand bottles through the country, some to President Roosevelt's table at Hyde Park.

That sign outside Jamesburg still troubled us, we told our guide. Who was Jamesburg really named for, anyway? There had been a couple of houses and a store there prior to 1792 at a corner known as Ensley's Mills. The sign says the name honors the first white settler, James Johnstone, but other sources declare that the name was first applied to the district school in honor of James Buckalew, of Buckalew's Mills and Buckalew's Bogs. Buckalew's Mills had been Gordon's Mills and Mount's Mills before that but today all that retains the name Mount's Mills is a dot on the map and a building near an ancient mill's foundations on the Englishtown-Jamesburg Road.

The school on which the name of Jamesburg first appeared in 1847 was the result of a row in 1846 when the trustees refused to admit a colored boy to the school already in use, a building "with slab seats and straight benches" abandoned in the year James Buckalew erected a two-story structure to end the squabble. Both Johnstone and Frederick Buckalew, ancestor of the Buckalews, were Scotchmen. Johnstone came from Ochiltree and, being a member of the Spotswood clan, gave that name to the place between the present Jamesburg and Spotswood where he built a house in 1685. Buckalew

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sailed from Inverness on the *Calendonia* in 1715, fleeing religious persecution.

When the East Jersey Proprietors offered fifty acres to each head of a family and twenty-five acres additional for each extra importee, James Johnstone got busy, bringing to the vicinity, as indentured servants, many whom some of the first families of the midlands own as ancestors today, Margaret Welch, Alexander Adam, John English, John Gibb, William Mountt, George Eford and Robert Moure. The Indian meanings of Matchaponix and Manalapan, contrasting the good and bad bread country so graphically, were kept in the dark while James wrote home describing the banks of the two streams as waterways of paradise. While James was urging his brother, John, and as many others as would, to join him with such declarations as "I have taken up a part of my land 9 miles from Amboy and 4 miles from Piscataway . . . where there are exceeding great plains without any timber, where there is excellent Gunning for deers and turkies of which there is a great number and easily shot" and "in the summer there is plenty of fruits, Peaches, Walnuts, Chestnuts, Strawberries and another berry like Currents," many passengers were arriving already.

Jim Vandenberg reminded us that we had said we hadn't planned to say a great deal about Jamesburg, the town that started last and got ahead faster, because in reality it wasn't a forgotten village. We admitted that but in our own defense we said that Ensley's Mills were surely forgotten and after all, this business of the Jameses was intriguing. "We want to get to the Devil's Half Acre as much as you do," we told him. We wanted to see what we heard Mr. Johnstone had to say about mosquitoes.

We found it in the same letter already quoted but in additional description which is so often passed by. There might be mosquitoes in the lowlands, declared the canny Scotchman seeking to increase the colony and his property, but not there on the plains! And snakes? Why, they sounded an alarm so you didn't come near enough to get bitten! Listen to this:

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"Wolves are so far from troubling men, that if a man should lay a glove upon a carcass or their prey they will yell but not come nigh it. You cannot come nigh a rattlesnake but they will rattle with their tail, whereby a man is advertised either to kill them or go by them. They frequently charm the squirrels or other little beasts off the tops of the trees into their mouth, and that without touching them with their teeth, which if they did they would poison themselves. The flea (mosquito?) that is troublesome on the low and marshy grounds is not found on the uplands. I am mightily pleased with my coming over, neither do I think I could live again in Scotland. . . . Strawberries grow very thick upon the ground amongst the trees, so that some places in the woods are in summer, as it were, covered with a red cloth. The land is exceeding good which is yet to take up, much better than what is inhabited. There is very much syder here which is our principal drink. The Indians are not troublesome any way if we do not harm them, but are a kind and loving people; the men do nothing but hunt, and the women they plant corn and work at home. . . ."

Thus you have your choice between the Jameses, Buckalew or Johnstone, in the naming of the town of today, on the one hand a pioneer who surely was one of the champion real-estate salesmen of the times, and on the other, one of the Buckalews who came long after but in early stage lines, rail-roading and that incident of the school, was an obviously remarkable man of courage and foresight. Perhaps, when you think of Jamesburg, it would be better to remember them both, James the pioneer cutting the way, and James one of the few early friends of the Camden & Amboy who, deriding school trustees who encouraged race prejudice, was remembered by a stone marked "Jamesburg" in the school he built at his own expense.

There's very little of what Mr. Clayton quaintly calls "sulphurous suggestiveness" in what remains of The Devil's Half Acre. East of Prospect Plains, they call it Half Acre now. Where roads have changed and hotels have become dwellings, there is little chance of recognition. But Half Acre is but "an abbreviation of a flippant name . . . by which is known a settlement in the west part of Monroe, about two miles and a half southerly from Jamesburg, containing a store, a hotel, a wheelwright and blacksmith shop, and a few dwellings."

There was a time when the town was known by its full brimstone title, "on account, it is said, of having gotten into

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bad odor with the public as a consequence of frequent unseemly orgies and hand-to-hand encounters at the old tavern there, in the days when resort to arms is said to have been a favorite mode of adjusting personal misunderstandings, and 'hard hitters' are supposed to have been plenty everywhere." Mr. Clayton treats of the matter first with Victorian aloofness and then offers another version which, he says, "totally ignores the suppositious connection of the Evil One with the locality." This explanation has to do with two roads which were said to have passed the tavern, one going by the front door and the other by the back. "The latter was fenced up by the proprietor in such a manner as to form an inclosure behind the tavern of half an acre of land, which circumstance caused the name 'Half Acre House' to attach to the hotel, and in time to the immediate neighborhood."

The roads at the corner are such that one can see how there may have been two roads, front door and back, in the old days, and so it is concluded that the first explanation is as good as the second. However, if every tradition depended on things to be seen and touched today, New Jersey's midlands might lose much of their charm. The dwelling that once was the Half Acre House, although it retains some of the lines of an ancient hostelry, seems as foreign to the devilish days as the present Jamesburg is to the era when a tavern gave it the name of West's, even on railroad tickets. Conductors who either didn't like the new name or wanted to use up the old tickets, called "West's" very loudly and all but whispered "Jamesburg" when officials of line "thought it advantageous to stop for passengers at the village."

Before going to Prospect Plains, which may have a modern sound, but for all that is described by Thomas Gordon as "a level tract of country extending between Cranberry Brook and Manalapan Brook, with a light sandy soil, in South Amboy t-ship, Middlesex co.," we talked again of Cranbury and all that had disappeared, the elm under which David Brainerd preached at the end of the village when he was the guest of Mr. McKnight, whom he describes as "a serious minister,"

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and the days of the Cranbury Inn when it was the United States Hotel of Peter Perrine, with a long list of proprietors who included Captain Timothy Horner, Abraham Voorhees, John G. Grover, William S. Appleget, William K. Lombard and a host of others. Perhaps Adrian Van Ravesteyn, a Hollander, proprietor when we were there, had Dutch forebears who knew the ancestors of many who are in this area of New Jersey today.

On our first visit to Prospect Plains we saw the dwelling of Maitland Vandenberg that so obviously was an inn in former days. What Mr. Vandenberg will tell you is something you couldn't guess, that the inn was first a house and didn't become a tavern until the building of the Camden & Amboy in 1830-1832. For that matter, any amount of guessing wouldn't have indicated to us that this crossing, with a tall oak beside the erstwhile inn, once boasted a post office, hotel, school, smithy and all kinds of activity.

Just as the railroad was carried through, what became a tavern, the Railroad House, was built as the home of William Stults. In spite of the name it later acquired, it remained a dwelling until 1862. Prospect Plains seems to have been a headquarters of the Davisons—back when there was little more than the name, Garret S. Davison was running a distillery there. Davison & Stonaker opened a general store in 1832 and the establishment stayed in the family for more than fifty years. The Mounts had a store, too, and here around the miscellany of country requisites tall tales were spun and the most impractical of practical jokes were played.

It was in 1890's that Abijah Applegate—ask for "Bije" in the neighborhood if you want to meet him—appeared as an important figure at Prospect Plains. "Bije" has a whole cargo of recollections, as the assistant postmaster and as a partner in the Mount & Applegate store. His prize yarn concerns another store in Freehold, Perrine's, where, he has maintained, the stock was so complete that a man once went in and ordered a pulpit and got it. George B. Perrine, once the village jokester at Prospect Plains, is a member of the cast in another of the Applegate repertoire: George bet a Jewish peddler fifty

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cents that he could jump in his basket of eggs without breaking one. Jumping in, he smashed them all, remarked how strange that was inasmuch as it never happened before and cheerfully paid the wager.

George once played a joke on "Bije" but "Bije" got even. After the prank-loving lingerer dropped a couple of crocks, accidentally on purpose, "Bije" sold him five-cent cigars for ten cents for years till he collected the loss from Applegate—then he told him!

The smithy, the carriage factory and the cobbler are gone from Prospect Plains. Maitland Vandenberg's father, Robert, rented the old hotel in 1907 and ran it till 1917 when he converted it to the dwelling it was in the first place. The hay press, which for so long persisted in making the village a business center, later became a plant making chemical fertilizers and insecticides, still operated by Bennet & Clayton, Inc.

It was George Everingham, once the wheelwright of Red Tavern, later Applegarth, who figured in our next meeting—going about with Jim Vandenberg was like officiating at Old Home Week, with new trimmings. Even those who had forgotten him remembered his father and at Applegarth we were "almost in the family." Applegarth was Red Tavern from days long before the Revolution until 1888—then it was that a post office came and the time-worn name went into the ash barrel. Even after the name changed, the tavern kept on and it was still going, as a modern counterpart of the old establishment that burned, when we were there.

George Everingham, whose father and grandfather were smiths and wheelwrights before him, there at the crossroads, told us several times that disastrous fires had a lot to do with the town's growing down. "Why, you remember—" he began story after story, and then paused, realizing that he was talking to Jim, and not his father, the last of the Vandenberghs who operated the Red Tavern from 1853. James Vandenberg sold the original tavern in 1901 to Enos Mount and Mount moved it across the street adjoining his store, where it burned down.

In one of the few instances of which we had heard in

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which Pineys moved from their southern habitat, a group came to Red Tavern in the 1870's, George said, making baskets from oak and hickory splints for oystermen of Keyport. There is a record of a "basket factory" at Applegarth in 1888 and as recently as 1915 or 1916, some baskets were being made there, George recalled. Seated on the porch of his little house close by the shop he said he had to close when the old business fell to nothing and his enterprise failed to equal newer trends, we were delighted to listen while George and Mrs. Everingham recalled the principal characters of the hamlet they knew and that few who merely pass by can realize. There are more apples than are needed to keep doctors away there, and there have always been, it seems, in one way or another—apples in the orchards, apples on their way to the old distillery, apple brandy, Applegets and Applegates.

A chill wind blew over the corners, warning that colder weather was coming, and proving, despite the occasional warm sunshine, that the turning of the leaves was no mere colorful gesture. The autumn was closing in, just as the autumn of its life had settled on Red Tavern in Applegarth, with sodden tubs and rusting pipes at the old distillery wondering if the apple crop had failed or if all the farmers were dead.

George said he remembered when the store was conducted by Alfred Clayton.

"That was seventy-five or eighty years ago," he said. Then he enumerated others who had been operators of what must have been one of the chief centers of life there at the corners, Major Hooper, Harrison Rogers, Baird and Disbrow Applegate, Leonard Smith, Enos Mount, Will Hoagland and Anthony Applegate. "B'glory," said he, "there's whole generations dead and gone," not mournfully at all but genuinely pleased that he could remember, with Mrs. Everingham's help. "Things don't come to you as they should," said the former smith of Red Tavern, "when you don't see 'em or think about 'em for fifteen or twenty years."

George said Joseph Davison had the village smithy when

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he was a boy. What he didn't say, perhaps because it was in the family, was that William and Ellison Everingham owned wheelwright shops there, as recorded in Mr. Clayton's ponderous book. From the same source was revealed that the Red Tavern that gave the hamlet its first name was in operation during the Revolution and that a Colonel Jones was minehost in 1800, with S. D. Vandenberg taking over, after a host of transient proprietors, in 1853, when there were at least a dozen houses around it.

It was another Anthony Applegate who located near the Red Tavern before Revolutionary days. During the war Anthony was awakened one night by someone at the door. He leapt from bed, unbarred the barrier and was shot by a band of woods robbers outside. "Who they were and in what manner Applegate had incurred their enmity was never ascertained," runs the old account. "He was a quiet and unobstrusive man, and had not taken a decided stand either for or against the colonies, and could hardly have been marked as a victim on political grounds." There are many mysteries lingering at Red Tavern but none quite as colorful as that.

"I closed down three or four years ago," the smith of yesterday was talking reminiscently again. "I hadn't done much in the shop for a long time. If I had been younger—and sometimes I wish I was!—I'd have gone into business making truck bodies. I made just one. But it got so's I couldn't put any confidence in myself—I just had to give it up."

George and his wife recalled the time the store and its adjoining dwelling were struck by lightning, Jersey lightning of a sort that isn't distilled in Applegarth, and were set afire. "Old Jing, the dog, didn't like storms and always went under the house—that was the place that stood there before they used the barn for another. Jing and some chickens were killed when the bolt came down, cuttin' through the house and shooting 'cross the road, hittin' a tree and then bouncin' back, curling a furrow as clean as a plow!"

George, who didn't admit his age until a second visit made us better known, laughed when we hazarded a seventy-two.

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"Why, boy," he said, "I'm eighty-two and more!" Then he declared that although the village may have lost a little through the years, there is more travel "through it" today "than there's been since Red Tavern was here and the coaches came bowling down the road. And I ought to know," added the smith of the closed smithy and nailed-up wheelwright shop. "I used to watch every wheel and hoof for business. In those days we used to go places only when we had to. Now people go when they really don't want to—and get killed!"

Mrs. Everingham bore out George's estimate that he was the oldest resident of Applegarth—"him and Belle Applegate," she amended, thoughtfully. "We're the last," George repeated, letting fly a brown spurt that still linked him with days at the forge. "We used to know everybody up and down the Federal Road that runs by here—but it's got so we don't know *anybody* any more." There was a kind of bewilderment in his tone, as if it implied that the scheme of things had gone all wrong.

Jim Vandenberg asked if there wasn't a graveyard behind what he called "the Old Church School" and George said there was. "There was stones, too," he went on. "But they was all plowed under long ago."

"How about the graveyard where the Applegate who was killed by the robbers was buried," Jim persisted.

"That's up there on the opposite hill," George replied. "I never heard tell of any stones up there but you can find the place marked by some brown ironstones piled up against a couple of cedar trees."

We found both the Old Church School and the tiny enclosure said to be the Applegate family burial plot. It was difficult to realize that so much of regional historical importance had centered around them. The Old Church was occupied by a family, perhaps that of a tenant farmer, with a string of clothes hung to dry in silhouette against the bleak and splotchy October sky. There are no grave markers between the cedars in what was once the Applegate cemetery, up the rise from the farmhouse across the road. However, we took



This was the Indian school at Brotherton. Now the town is called Indian Mills.



The old Presbyterian Church at Cranbury, site of an earlier church that knew the Brainerds and their work among the Indians.



Here was the hamlet of Cat-tail. Now it's New Sharon and this is the old Methodist Church.

Only a pile of stones set in a square around two cedars in a wind-swept field, but the bones of Red Tavern pioneers lie somewhere near.



George Everingham's a little sad for here's the wheelwright shop he and his ancestors operated at Red Tavern, now Applegarth, closed forever.

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note of something that many may miss—the numerals, 1790, are just about discernible in one of the stones.

Just about everybody of importance in the area went to school there on the hill behind Applegarth and now, as residents of Hightstown, Cranbury, Windsor and the smaller towns, they resent, naturally enough, the lack of something to give it some distinction. Resentment in this particular is akin to that reserve for the transition of Perrineville. Thus we tried for a story or two that might serve the purpose, but legends, insofar as we heard them there on the edge of the midlands we wanted to know about, seem to linger more in the neighborhood of Matchaponix.

There were schools there before the memory of the oldest inhabitant when Woodford Clayton wrote his history in 1882. First there were pay-schools in early log homes and then there were log schools taught by teachers who were very often wanderers seeking something to do. One of that sort was probably the victim of an early Matchaponix lockout when the pupils barred the schoolhouse door. Determined to gain an entry, the schoolmaster climbed to the roof and blocking the chimney, sought to smoke out his charges. The class inside, opposed to "larnin'" on general principles, used a long pole to clear the chimney. Then the schoolmaster climbed back, placed a slab in position and sat on it. "Now something will happen," said he, waiting for the class to come out, coughing and crying from the smoke.

Something happened but that wasn't it. Using the pole again to good effect, the Matchaponix dislodged the slab, teacher and all, and juggled the pair of them off into a snow-bank.

There's another similar story which even the circumspect historians have noted, so prevalent is its telling in the vicinity. Perhaps it is a variation of the original or, on the other hand, it may be another incident altogether. This time the schoolmaster, having been locked out, turned the tables on his "students," locking them in. Parents are said to have enjoyed the fun on this occasion, carrying provisions to their offspring,

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"which they received through an opening so small as to forbid ingress or egress, the resolute and unyielding 'master of the birch' meanwhile standing guard outside."

Time and again as our journeys in and around Monroe Township went on, we concluded that much of what was once the importance of the countryside lay buried in scattered graveyards. As we came to the village of E. T. R. Applegate, called Etra in his honor, we found a burial plot along the road beyond the general store of S. L. Mount. Here the Whiles, Reynolds, Elys and Hutchinsons are remembered on smaller monuments but at one end, now revealed since the little grove of locusts has been cut away, there is a bulky shaft to all the Hutchinsons of the village and beyond, bearing the gloomy inscription, "To the Memory of a Household Dead."

Over at Eiler's Corner, below Hightstown, is what Jim Vandenberg said was once the old Norton family burial-ground. Now there is a rickety wooden gate proclaiming it the East Windsor Cemetery established in the late 1700's. But, more important, there is a brownstone tower, clad in clinging green in Summer and ghostly, whispering brown in Autumn, which ought to be the retreat of at least one shrouded phantom that, with midnight, could scamper up and down the steps of rusting iron inside in lonely uncertainty. At the top, from a rotting platform, he could look down on the graves of scores of Nortons, Elys and others who were the leaders in the midlands of their time. The tower, with a higher railed observatory and no steps to reach it, was erected by Joshua R. Norton in 1884.

On the Cranbury Road in East Windsor Township, two miles northwest of Hightstown, what was Taylor's Grove, an old spring and burying ground, are to be found on the farm owned by Harvey D. Pullen. When the farm was the property of Augustus M. Taylor, a picnic nook was opened in a grove of white oaks on the Millstone. William Davison Perrine, of Monmouth Junction, one of the most painstaking hunters for decadent romance, said there were Sunday school picnics, Negro camp meetings, chicken dinners and suppers

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for fifty cents and a general concentration of the jollity of country living. All that ended in 1897.

"A large oak tree grew beside the spring that flowed through a hollow gum log," said Mr. Perrine. "The old dance floor is still visible beside the stump of the oak. Those affairs sometimes drew large crowds and many had a hard time finding a place to tie their horses. If you wanted a whip when you came back, you took it with you. There used to be two iron bullfrogs at the bottom of the spring. Folks used to break drinking glasses, dropping them on the frogs—James Taylor, over in Hightstown, has the frogs now."

It was Mr. Taylor who said that as a boy 200 mounds were visible on a hill near the river there, the graves of Indians and slaves. Sarah M. Taylor, Mr. Taylor's grandmother, told how she often spoke to Indians on their way from Amboy to the Delaware. They often brought her oysters, Mrs. Taylor remembered. Many stones have been removed from the plot. Of those left there and those remaining intact, two mark Nixon graves and the others bear only initials.

Fifty years ago Union Valley was a hamlet in the southwest part of the township, with a store, a church and fifteen dwellings. Samuel Mace opened a store there in 1855, with Edgar Reed, Charles Perrine, George Wader and William Doty continuing the business. Today the modern successor of the old-time tavern where the road turns is all that remains of a business nature. Just around the corner there's a large boulder, in front of a picket fence, with a plaque informing those who pass that way that here was the site of the Union Valley Methodist Protestant Church, built in 1790, rebuilt in 1858, destroyed by fire in 1925.

In the graveyard are markers of members of the Black, Dey, Hall and Stults families. Sarah, the daughter of Elias and Ellen Stults, who died in 1851, left parting messages for members of her family circle and if you pass that way, you must read the verses:

"Dear Sister Anne, you stood by me
And watched my dying breath,
My Savior call'd me away from you
And took me home to rest.

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"Tell Hetty she must watch and pray
For Jesus soon will come
And take her soul from hence away
To its eternal home.

"Tell Lewis though he's but a youth
He's not too young to die
And if he does the truth obey
We'll meet in endless day."

We left the picket enclosure that once stood behind the church, hoping sincerely that Lewis had been a good boy, and thinking of Daddy Perkins, a circuit preacher, who organized a class at Union Valley in 1840, the hymn-singing at the home of Daniel Dey and all the Deys and Rues and Claytons who worshipped there at the old wooden church, thirty feet by twenty-two, and the other church that followed it. The little church at Fresh Ponds was also an outpost of the Methodist Protestants but even in the 1880's it was not being used.

A ghost story needs a good setting and Jim Vandenberg chose that moment to pull from his pocket a tattered clipping. He said nothing, just produced it. Naturally we brought the car to a sudden halt when we saw the headline, over the date of February 27, 1914,—“Ill Fate of Cranbury Home After Hiding of Aaron Burr.” Obviously it was the despatch the Cranbury publisher had declined to repeat because of something that happened years ago. “Where on earth did you get this?” we asked, for we had written to a friend in New Brunswick to obtain it, only to receive a mysterious silence for reply. Jim shrugged. “Guess it’s been handed around,” he said, noncommittally. And so it had, just as the legend itself has been handed around, in whispers, since anyone at Cranbury can remember.

Of course, no one really believes in ghosts. That’s what they’ll tell you. No one is really superstitious any more, they declared. Just the same—one might as well be on the safe side. Our attitude has been ever different from that. Most people say that what can’t be proven shouldn’t gain credence. We’ve argued that what can’t be disproved shouldn’t be

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utterly denied by open-minded people. As for haunted houses and ghosts that bring misfortune, well . . . anyhow, the spell was broken at the old Truxton house long ago, so why should there be so much fuss?

The house, next to the one we visited that day when the lady became so tight-lipped as soon as pencil and paper appeared, is at the corner of King George's and Plainsboro Roads. Upon the dwelling, it is said, there fell the shadow of misfortune for many years after Aaron Burr was hidden there. The news despatch, quoting an earlier account on its own score, said the strange nemesis was so persistent that for years the house was unoccupied. "During that time it got the reputation around Cranbury of being haunted, but this impression, of late years, has been dispelled."

Burr's duel with Hamilton was July 11, 1804, and when Hamilton was killed a storm of resentment broke about the head of Aaron and he had to flee for his life. Seeking a friend who would offer refuge, Burr chose Commodore Thomas Truxton, of the U. S. Navy, who had won his laurels on the *Constitution* when, in 1799, she vanquished the French frigate *L'Insurgents*. The commodore was living in Cranbury.

Having written his son-in-law, Joseph Alston, of South Carolina, that he was to be disfranchised in New York "and in New Jersey hanged," Burr said that "having substantial objections to both, I shall not at present hazard either." This was long after the shooting, long after Burr had sought out Commodore Truxton.

There is, or was, at the Truxton home, a beautiful stairway leading up to the third floor. At the top, this led to a stately bedroom. To this room, the story goes, Burr was shown and for a time he lived there in security, for back of the fireplace there was a secret panel opening on a passageway to the attic overhead. If the hunt grew hot, Burr was warned to flee to the attic.

While Burr was there, according to the stories Cranbury grandfathers and grandmothers used to tell, passers-by used to talk of a mysterious stranger who appeared only after dark,

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to pace the spacious lawn with Commodore Truxton. No one was sure it was Burr, at the time, but nearly everyone who saw him, or recalled the secrecy that was maintained about him, said it was. Aaron Burr is said to have stayed with the commodore three weeks.

From that period on, disaster seems to have settled on the old house. "It began," says the account, "even with old Commodore Truxton. His money matters went wrong; death struck in this family right and left, and finally he sold the mansion and went away to Philadelphia. . . . But Commodore Truxton got off easily compared with some of those who followed him. Instantly suicide, sudden death, fires and financial ruin were the lot of family after family that tried to live in the house."

The next owner was a Dr. Davis. He purchased the place some fifteen years after Burr was said to have been sheltered there. His wife was said to have gone mad and was confined, according to the legend, in the attic that had served as Burr's retreat. The woman, a Philadelphia beauty, was still the subject of many stories in the early 1900's in the village. In the end she committed suicide. The second death in the Davis family was that of a son who fell over the balustrade from the third story.

Walter Ruding followed Dr. Davis as the occupant. "The malevolent spirit of Burr seemed to take it out on the Rudings in the way of fires. Barns and outbuildings of all sorts went up in smoke. He was bankrupt when he moved away," declares the yellowing article.

After Ruding came Captain Backus. The Captain made the changes he wanted and then remained only a year, leaving without explanation. Dr. Doty came from California in 1852, declaring that plenty of money could rout any hoodoo. He was there about a year when Mrs. Doty said she wanted both wings of the house cut off and removed across the street.

"Don't ask questions—just do it," she urged, or something like that. "When the wings have been taken across the way, put them together again in the shape of a cross if you can.

STILL MORE ALIASES

And when the work's done, put a cross over the whole structure, won't you?"

Whatever it was that Mrs. Doty expected would be taken across the street with the two wings must have been left behind. There were several more fires, other disturbing things and then, when Mrs. Doty flatly refused to live any longer in the old Truxton place, the Doctor himself was ready to flee.

Daniel Dey took over and his wife was found insane shortly after. He cut down the sycamores under which Burr had walked, sold property at the edge of the big farm and disposed of other holdings, they say, all in vain. Financial ruin overtook him.

Nelson Petty succeeded Daniel Dey. He came to the old house to live the rest of his days in peace. He was going to putter about. His wife was going to enjoy quiet life in the country. His wife fell dying on the floor of the old-fashioned drawing room, a servant was accused of murdering her child, and Petty himself, wondering about it all while taking a bath, was killed by a hemorrhage.

The Pettys were there in the 1870's. Since then, from all one can learn at Cranbury, those who have defied the sinister reputation of the house have not been harmed. Perrines, Groveses, Bennetts and more Deys have come to live there and nothing has happened—that is, nothing but the things that should. There's been even a wedding or two without a sudden thud or scream.

So that's why, we said aloud, it's supposed to be a secret. They won't talk, eh? Perhaps they're right. It may be that they're sensible in shaking their heads, frowning, warning newcomers that there's no point in reaching back into the past, or asking people questions on the premises where a ghost may be lurking to do something about it if the wrong answers are given.

Jim Vandenbergh said he'd keep after it, that he'd find out if the new people who were in the Truxton house, the Curtisis, shared the uneasiness of all the others. We told

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him not to. Not that we were superstitious but . . . well, we didn't care to assume responsibilities for Aaron Burr's comeback at the end of some kind of a spirit-world cycle, any more than we wanted to go prying into the former Roosevelt mansion, near Hightstown, even though the owner, Mr. Joseph Profaci, of Brooklyn, was kind enough to send us a letter to show the caretaker. Some ghosts should have privacy, some sleeping dogs should be left to slumber in peace.

Although the whole countryside is pleasant enough on a sunny day, the "bad bread" lands become just that when the skies glower and those who depend on rheumatism as a weather forecast say the winter's coming on. A student pastor who holds services on alternating weeks in Perrineville and Manalapan, the old Manalapan Inn, Old Home Days in June when congregations and choirs hold reunions and provide collections for church repair, all strive valiantly to keep the past alive. But much has been folded away with the last reminiscences of the last descendants of Scotch, English and Dutch pioneers. Much that was colorful and gay is as dead as the memory of the elusive Penlopen, much remains in hiding under newer names. It may be that old towns want to be forgotten, want us to feel that their world was not ours and our ways not theirs.

In considering that, we thought we had come to the climax. Nothing could be quite as deathlike as an old mill, falling apart like the one near Manalapan, or old smithies, locked and barred for years like those at Red Tavern or the Half Acre. Thinking aloud, Jim Vandenberg contradicted us.

"How about a dead cemetery?" he asked us, taking us up Disbrow Hill. There as late as 1933, a Lutheran cemetery was begun, with an impressive building just inside gates of sturdy stone and shrub-lined paths leading up the hill. In the weeds that have overgrown all the grading that was done we found three graves. In the office was a desk and on it a telephone, hung with cobwebs, and a map of the venture, left there when he decided to go away, abandoning the apple trees of Disbrow Hill to their own devices.

Chapter 18

OLD SHREWSBURY TOWNE

"Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
'Tis some poor fellow's skull, said he,
Who fell in the great victory."

—ROBERT SOUTHEY: 1774-1843

IT SEEMS to be more than appropriate that Shrewsbury, a Tory town of olden days if there ever was one, still boasts an English crown atop the steeple of a church, one of the most important in the country.

That true patriot, Mr. Gordon, confines himself when speaking of the village, listing it merely as a post-town in 1834, in "Shrewsbury township, Monmouth county, between Shrewsbury and Nevisink rivers, 12 miles east from Freehold, 50 southeast from Trenton . . . containing 12 or 15 dwellings, an Episcopalian and Presbyterian church, 1 tavern and 2 stores."

The *Gazetteer* shows greater freedom in describing Shrewsbury Township, however, declaring, among other things, that "the celebrated Long Branch boarding houses, so named for their vicinity to the long branch of Shrewsbury river, are in this township," described a century ago as owning 64,000 acres, a population upwards of 4700, 21 stores, 5 saw-mills, 1 carding machine, 60 tan vats, 730 horses and mules and 1650 neat cattle. "Several thousand acres of this t-ship," Mr. Gordon goes on, "were settled in 1682, and the inhabitants then were computed at 400. Lewis Morris of Barbadoes, the brother of Richard Morris, the first settler at Morrisiana, New York, and uncle of Lewis Morris, subsequently governor of New Jersey, had iron works and other considerable improvements here."

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John Barber and Henry Howe, writing in 1847, had much more to disclose. Dating the settlement of Shrewsbury from 1664 and describing an "annexed engraving" in their paragraphs on Shrewsbury, they point out that "the building on the right, partly hidden by locust trees, is the Episcopal church. In the distance on the right side of the street," the description continues, "is shown the Presbyterian church—a plain structure, without spire; and nearly opposite, on the left, the Friends meeting-house."

Here where the roads cross, variously called "The Four Corners" and "The Spire," you will find the scene much as it was centuries ago, except for road improvements.

In estimates of every historian there are indications that the corners at Shrewsbury were highly important from the beginning. Yet, many who hurry by today, on their way up or down the coast or to the shore, are unaware that here are preserved treasures that can be duplicated nowhere in the country.

Where else does there remain a church with an English crown atop its spire? Where else, outside museums or places far away, is there a "Vinegar Bible?" Where else will you find a tombstone, embraced by the growth of a tulip tree so that, in these days, only an inch or two protrude from the stump? These were the unusual things to be seen which arrested us long before the lure of wandering settled down to consideration of too-easily forgotten history within our reach. Now, no matter what the season, there is an eloquence of scene at Shrewsbury that finds no equal anywhere.

It was certainly fortunate that in 1922 Old Christ Church, the "Episcopalian" church mentioned by Thomas Gordon and "the building on the right" located by Barber and Howe, called the Reverend Carroll Mathews Burck to be rector. For through the efforts of Father Burck and a love of tradition and order, bred in the Church, the church today is mostly as it was when those early reporters of history visited it. The parish was founded in 1702 and the present church goes all the way back to 1769.

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We met the priest several years before we appreciated the fullness of Shrewsbury, when we were writing about some new china made in England commemorating in its pattern the first outposts of the Church of England in the colony. Through the years, he and his committees have mended here and restored there until Old Christ Church is, as Alden Cottrell said, one of the most important, if not the most important church in New Jersey.

In the vestibule are the original charter, signed by King George II and Governor Burnet in 1738, and the builder's agreement, signed June 12, 1769, assenting to construct the church building for three hundred pounds with "posts as high as timber on the spot will admit of," sixty-two feet long and thirty-eight wide. Not far from these famous papers, guarded well in the shrine they created, are two tablets, one in memory of Governor Lewis Morris and the other commemorating William Leeds, whose benefactions included land for the churches both in Middletown and Shrewsbury Towne.

There is a third tablet inscribed with the names of rectors of the parish, only eighteen of them in two hundred and thirty-five years.

The name of George Keith, who was there in 1702 and 1703, leads all the rest. George, you may remember, was the young leader of the Friends whose enthusiasm carried him beyond the first tenets of the sect and into the Church of England. Ordained overseas and returned to the field of his former labors, George turned many of the meeting houses where he had preached as a Quaker into outposts of the Church and was otherwise "disturbing."

"Although the township was undoubtedly settled by Presbyterians," declare the chroniclers of *Historical Collections*, "or rather, Congregationalists from Connecticut, yet the society of Friends was first organized. From the best sources of information now to be obtained, it is evident the first members of the society, most if not all of them, must have been emigrants from England." We smiled over that, remembering how so many, proud of their patriot ancestry, had

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remarked the oddity of our interests in such beginnings when, as they said, we came among them as a Tory, almost, or at least the son of "English emigrants." For some reason those without a sense of humor do some squirming there.

"The family of Hartshornes" of whom we were to hear much more at the Highlands and the Hook "were already members of this meeting as early as 1672, only eight years after the first settlement of the town. And at this time there were organized a 'monthly and general meeting, and a place of meeting being built.' The society was also visited in the autumn of this year by George Fox, who is believed by some of the members of the society to have performed a miracle while on this visit, by setting a man's neck, which it was believed by the inhabitants was broken or dislocated by his being thrown from a horse. It is true the man revived while Fox was working his head, and was enabled to pursue his journey the following day."

Thus the corner could be Miracle Corner, too! Now, then:

"In the fall of 1702, the society appears to have been disturbed by a visit of the Rev. George Keith to this place, who had formerly been a minister in their society at Burlington, and had visited them when such, but was now a missionary from 'the Society in England for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts,' and succeeded in drawing several families from them into the Church of England—among whom was the family of William Leeds, to whose liberal bequest the Episcopal Church in this place is indebted for the large glebe, and the funds they now possess. The cause of disturbance and secession appears to have originated in a difference of opinion in reference to the fundamental principles of the gospel."

Probably if the Reverend George had been engaged in his work today, he would have been in the midst of what would have been called a Modernist-Fundamentalist row. Even in his time, the battle seems to have been equally as vitriolic, for there's plenty of fire in Mr. Keith's own *Journal*, Leslie's *Snake In The Grass*, and other writings of the Friends.

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But there are other famous rectors on the list that includes Alexander Innes, 1703 to 1713; John Forbes, 1733 to 1737; Thomas Thompson, 1746 to 1751; Samuel Cooke, 1751 to 1775; Henry Waddell, 1788 to 1799; Andrew Fowler, 1799 to 1806; John Croes, 1809 to 1824; Eli Wheeler, 1824 to 1830; Harry Finch, 1830 to 1863; Thomas J. Taylor, 1863 to 1866; William B. Otis, 1866 to 1875; Benjamin Franklin, D.D., 1875 to 1898; William N. Baily, 1899 to 1906; Fred P. Swezey, 1906 to 1919; Alanson Q. Bailey, 1919 to 1922, with Father Burck assuming the charge in that year.

Historians have described George Keith as "a man of considerable notoriety, as he for some time filled the office of surveyor-general of the province, and ran what is now known as Keith's line dividing East and West Jersey." Ordained by the Bishop of London, the former Quaker, turned parson, went back over familiar ground in New Jersey, accompanied by the Reverend John Talbot, who became rector of Old St. Mary's, Burlington. "His success in this place, as well as most others," the writers of the times admit, "was considerable."

Alexander Innes, "who resided at Middletown at this time, performed occasional services at Shrewsbury, as well as at the place of his residence," according to Mr. Keith's writings. John Forbes has been described as "a man of an excellent spirit, a missionary from the society in England," who "officiated in this and neighboring towns, particularly Freehold and Middletown. In one account the Reverend John Miln is marked as John Forbes' successor, with Thomas Thompson following "in the missionary labors of this county, traveling from 60 to 70 miles, ministering the Word and Sacraments to the thinly scattered inhabitants. In this manner," the account goes on, "he labored until 1751, when his missionary spirit was directed to benighted Africa" where he lost his health, dying in England.

There was no such thing as Christianity on a one-day week in those days. Missionary zeal was as far-reaching as it was competitive and, as far as Mr. Thompson was concerned,

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could not limit itself to the "ease" of a seventy-mile circuit but had to go beyond to a foreign field in which we seldom think of missionaries at work as long as that ago.

Then came Samuel Cook, in 1751, "the last missionary from the society in England, who continued to labor here until the commencement of the revolutionary war, when, feeling it his duty to continue his allegiance to the British government, he retired to the province of New Brunswick, where, in a short time after, himself and son were drowned in attempting to cross the river St. Johns."

From then until 1788 there was no resident priest for these were uncertain days. Neighboring rectors sometimes took charge but usually the services were in charge of lay-readers. Henry Waddell was inducted as the first rector of the parish in 1788 and the senior warden officiated, "there being no canonical provision for the institution of a minister in the diocese at this time." Andrew Fowler, whose name in the writings of Barber and Howe is given as Fawler, came to the parish in 1799 and while there, "in addition to his ministerial labors, prepared and published a Practical Exposition of the Book of Common Prayer, as well as several smaller works, designed to advance the interests of the church."

Perhaps, because of so much that has happened at "The Spire," one can almost feel it as a place set apart. So much in all of us that responds to greater reverence, to charm and loveliness, must discern a new beauty in holiness at the church. Here are the corners known to William Leeds who lived and was buried at what is now called Lincroft, not far from Phalanx, once called Leedsville and, before that, Sandy New, according to Father Burck. The body was removed from the Glebe in 1906 to its present burial place, north of the vestibule. Lord Carteret gave the grant for this property to William Stout, Jr., in 1676—and there we have the Stouts again! Two days later it was deeded to Thomas Wright, who transferred it in 1683 to William Leeds.

There were arguments, usually, with the Indians from whom land was bought. Many of the natives, disposing of

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their holdings, had difficulty understanding that after the purchase they no longer had the right to go back for hunting and fishing there. Whether that was the snarl in the case of William Leeds or not is uncertain; however, when the Indians still claimed the land sold by Thomas Wright, Leeds bought it from them a year later, paying them with nine quarts of rum with the cask, three blankets, six yards of Duffield tobacco, two new shirts and two more good new shirts, to be paid in six months, and a good new kettle within fourteen months.

Thus purchased, finally, William Leeds willed the property on June 20, 1735, as a Glebe, or ecclesiastical benefice, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts for the benefit of Christ Church, Shrewsbury, and Christ Church, Middletown, after the death of his wife and his brother Daniel. Leeds, who is remembered by his grave at Shrewsbury and a monument attesting his benefactions outside the little church at Middletown, died April 27, 1739.

In the shadow of the English crown below the weather vane on the steeple, the gilded ball continues to show the marks and holes of bullets, fired in days when patriots sought to shoot the emblem of King George III from the spire. The oldest known grave is that of Benjamin Stelle who died in 1719. Perhaps the most unusual graves are those of Hannah Cook Dennis and Anthony, her husband, with the stone that marks the burial plot of Mrs. Dennis all but concealed from view, imbedded by the growth of a tulip tree whose stump indicates its size and age.

Anthony, who was born in 1728, died in 1813. Hannah, born in 1751, died in 1799. In subsequent years, the tree, planted between their graves, enveloped the headstone on that of Mrs. Dennis, so that its inscription was hidden entirely, necessitating a plate on the tree itself, revealing what had happened in a century, with the name and dates. In a storm of the July prior to our last visit there, half the tree fell and the rest was taken down later so that another fall would not crush the church. Trees but a few feet away, decidedly interesting,

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too, are often passed by without remark; these are twin cypresses, perhaps brought from the South decades ago.

The stone marking the grave of William Leeds, just outside the church porch, is unusual now because the tablet that first was attached to it was stolen and used for bullets during the Revolution; another tablet is in its place where for years there was an oblong cavity, used by sparrows as a bird-bath for many decades in rainy weather. Near the church are the stones of John Redford, 1704, and Gabrielle Stelle, 1723.

It would be impossible to record all the names of first families of pioneer days as they were graven, years ago, on the white and brown stones. The first generation are neighbors of many generations that have followed them, Wests with Roches, Throckmortons with Tiltens, Wests, Allaires, Eatons and Toles with the Hinckses, Captain Francis and his son, Francis Stewart, the son and grandson of Sir Francis Hincks, K.C.M.C.C.B.

A Howard clock from Boston strikes the hours at the Four Corners and, on invitation of the verger, we climbed up from the choir-loft, back of the organ, to see the solid old timbers, shaped with an adze, and watch the giant pendulum swing to and fro. The bell in the tower was made in France in 1788 and then shipped to San Domingo for use in a Convent. After the Revolution there, as Father Burck has explained, it was taken to Little Neck, Long Island, by a Mr. Van Zandt, who had it hung in the Church Tower. Mr. Van Zandt hadn't figured on a hill between his house and the tower which, he said, prevented his hearing the bell ring. The Reverend Eli Wheeler, who was rector of Christ Church from 1824 to 1830, purchased it and had it hung in the old oak tree near the church until the tower was prepared for it.

Before going into the church, as impressive as the setting it commands, we paused again to contemplate the line of gravestones known to all familiar with the section as "The Ten Little Joneses." At the end of a path running south from the tulip stump are the graves of ten children of Aaron and Rebecca Jones, all of whom died within ten days of their



At Shrewsbury, at what were once "The Four Corners" and "The Spire" is the old Allen House, bearing the date of 1667.



Now and then one runs across an old lock, made entirely from wood. There is one at the Allen House in Shrewsbury.



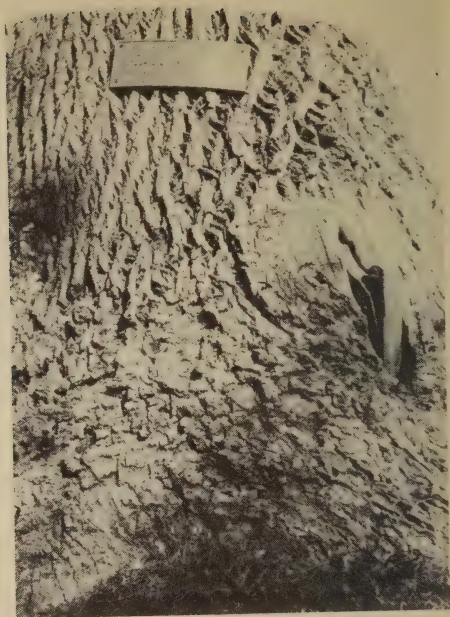
In the Allen House at Shrewsbury are hideaways and secret panels. In this one, the story goes, they found a skeleton many years ago, with nothing to explain it.



The huge fireplace in the Allen House.



At the top of old Christ Church in Shrewsbury is the English crown that was there before the Revolution. Below, a bell, made in France.



Until perhaps a year ago, this tree was alive, when a limb of the giant tulip fell, the church was in danger beside it, and it was taken down.



Here at Shrewsbury, oblivious to the years that have passed since it was built in 1769, is Christ Church.

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birth. All were unnamed apparently as only the letter "J" is to be found upon the tiny markers. Aaron and his wife died in 1879, Aaron in January, Rebecca in February.

In the church are two canopied pews, one for the rector's family, at the head of the south aisle, the other the Colonial Governor's pew at the head of the north. That constructed for the highest provincial official is believed to be the only one still existing in the country. Under the south aisle is the grave, marked by a tablet, of Theodosius Bartow, father-in-law of Aaron Burr. Under the Gospel-side aisle and beneath the Litany desks are other graves of the 1700's.

Today the pew which was constructed for the first priests' families, and obviously those families were expected to be large judging from the seating capacity, serves as a little treasure-house by itself. In it is a huge Vinegar Bible and early Prayer Books. The Vinegar Bible, of which only seven copies are known to exist, was so named because of the error made at the head of the page recounting "The Parable of the Vineyard." John Basket, of Oxford, who printed this copy in 1716-1717, made a mistake and the resulting heading is "The Parable of the Vinegar." This Bible was presented by Robert Elliston, Comptroller of His Majesty's Customs at New York, in 1752.

The Bible was "erected as an affectionate tribute of esteem by the wardens and vestry" of the church to Michael Cook, son of the Reverend Samuel Cook, rector of the church "who in his manly efforts and persevering struggles to preserve the life of his venerable parent from drowning, added to the public calamity by the loss of his own, in the full vigor of health and thirty-first year of his age." The name appears variously as Cook and Cooke down through the years but the spelling doesn't matter much. Many have branded the last missionary from England a Tory but surely no reprobation attaches itself to that: Samuel Cooke was a priest of the Church of England, and, moreover, a representative of an English society living in a part of New Jersey in which there were many opposed to any complete breaking-away from the

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mother country. Surely he went away with heavy heart to New Brunswick where tragedy was so soon to overtake him and his son.

One of the Prayer Books, printed at Cambridge, England, in 1760, was presented to the church in 1767 by Governor William Franklin, last of the colonial governors of New Jersey and arch-conspirator with Tories and Refugees who operated from a base on the Hook in harrying the patriots in war-time. In the Sanctuary, the bishop's chair is the handiwork of Robert H. White, once clerk of the vestry, whose grave is among the many Whites in the churchyard; the chair was carved from the oak tree from which the old bell was once suspended. If the church, with its boxed pews, carved canopies supported by fluted pillars and so much that is ancient, were not so well-cared-for, it might be a ghostly place, but, due to the restorations of Father Burck and others, and the memory of so many who have worshipped God here since the days when Lewis Morris occupied the Governor's enclosure, the quiet dignity of the nave is inescapable.

At the Rectory on Sycamore Avenue, east of the church, are still other treasures, among them the Communion Service presented by Queen Anne in 1708 and in continuous use since that time, the original Indian deed with the "marks" of Indian chieftains affixed in 1684, records of the church dating from 1733 and listing Baptisms, Confirmations, marriages and burials, Lord Carteret's deed of 1676, additional Prayer Books. One of these, that of Queen Elizabeth's edition of 1662 and presented by Cecilia M. Hincks in 1938, has been added to that presented by Governor Franklin and others of 1795 and 1805. At the Rectory is also a homespun linen bag in which William Leeds carried his private papers, as well as many other interesting articles which the rector or his wife will show you.

The church land was bought from Nicholas Brown in 1706 and the first church probably erected between 1706 and 1714. The plot was described as beginning "on Nicholas Brown's land, at a walnut stump, bearing southwesterly twelve degrees

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westerly from ye Quaker's Meeting-House Chimbley, and from John West's great house chimbley north fifty-eight degrees easterly." One authority, Gustav Kobbé, writing about 1888, stated without question that the first church was built in 1715, "of stone, a few feet north of the present structure."

General Ulysses S. Grant, then President, was present when the centenary of the cornerstone laying was marked in 1869, with Bishop Odenheimer officiating. The church, "surmounted by an iron crown under a copper vane, supported by a rod springing from a gilded ball" had survived, and still survives, the changes that have come since Shrewsbury was settled by pioneers from New England, Rhode Island and New York, on the King's Highway, dating from 1685, previous to which time it had been an Indian trail to the sea. It survived the pot shots of the patriots as well as at least one attempt to destroy it by fire when the flames were extinguished by William Parker, a Quaker, "who rushed in and threw his coat over the starting blaze." "This spirit of desecration," declared Mr. Kobbé, "was doubtless due to the fact that Rev. Samuel Cooke, then in charge of the parish, was in strong sympathy with the English." Perhaps it was pure devilment!

As important as Old Christ Church is to the crossroads, there is much more. Across the way is an old Meeting House which, though it may seem deserted during weekdays, is still used in the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth months. This is not the meeting place established by the Friends in 1672 but one that replaced it in 1816, according to most accounts. It was in 1672 that the Quakers of Shrewsbury "received a visit from the famous Quaker apostle, George Fox. He crossed New York Bay in a sloop to Middletown Harbor," according to the *Jersey Coast and Pines*, published in 1888, "and lodged with Richard Hartshorne, who had recently purchased the Highlands district."

Mr. Fox, in his *Journal*, wrote: "Next day we rode about thirty miles into that country, through the woods and over very bad bogs, one worse than all the rest, the descent into

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which was so steep that we were fain to slide down with our horses and let them lie and breathe themselves before they go on. This place the people are fain to call Purgatory. We got at length to Shrewsbury in East Jersey, and on First day had a precious meeting there. . . . They are building a house in the midst of them."

Originally there was a brick Meeting House where the frame structure stands now, land purchased as far back as 1695. With the schism of 1828, Hicksites retained the frame structure and Orthodox Friends held services in private homes, as they had in the very beginning, until their own building was finished and used, later on, as a Library Hall. Because the cemetery of the Friends, with its small stones, extends out to the corner opposite the fine old Allen house, there is a clearing which balances the crossroads called The Spire.

Shrewsbury is one of the few villages that can boast a post office in the middle of the street but that is because the structure, small, square and one story high, was once the toll house on the road to the shore, the route to Tinton Falls and now Sycamore Avenue. In front of the post office there is a flag-staff in the clearing erected in memory of Lieutenant Samuel Hoyt, of Wadsworth's Brigade, Connecticut State Troops, and Lieutenant Colonel David S. Brown, of the Twenty-second Infantry, New York National Guard in 1862. The inscription also includes the names of Shrewsbury Towne Chapter, D.A.R., and Lucille Brown Hunter, through whom the staff was erected. The present name of the avenue is derived from the trees behind the post office.

When Alden Cottrell prepared his *Noteworthy Trees of New Jersey* as assistant State forester, he pointed out in the little book distributed by the New Jersey Conservation and Development Department that no claim was made that these sycamores at the Four Corners were living during the early history of the town. There was a newspaper account which declared the trees were planted July 4, 1776, but, as Alden has said, "in view of the probable age of these trees, this story appears to be the conception of an over-enthusiastic patriot.

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A more reasonable tradition is that they were set out by William L. Lippincott, who planted trees extensively in Shrewsbury about the year 1800." Today the Shrewsbury sycamores stand sentinels over what was the Minisink Trail and Burlington Path, two famous Indian trails from the Delaware River to the Atlantic shore.

As recently as 1930, the trees were almost cut down. County authorities decided that several trees in the street were ready to fall and that they must be removed before serious accident occurred. One tree, a pine, was already down before Shrewsbury's modern patriots knew what was going on. Suddenly women in the community divided into two groups, one hurrying to Freehold for legal papers with which to check the axemen, and the other, by one ruse or another, dishes of ice cream causing the climax interruption, to hold up the work. Finally the committee which had gone to Freehold came back with an injunction and the sycamores were saved. Today the trees are as healthy as they ever were.

The Presbyterian Church, opposite the old Meeting House, dates back to the seventeenth century, as far as organization is concerned, but the church near the crossroads is successor to one erected there in 1727. These were days when dissenters, congregations outside the Church of England, were not permitted, as groups, to hold title to land in New Jersey. Thus the tract for the Presbyterian Church was sold to Alexander Napier and others, as individual purchasers. The present church was built in 1821 and was enlarged in 1845 "without altering its simple old-time character."

Some historians have declared that "there is no authentic record of the Presbyterian church at Shrewsbury, until the year, 1735, when Rev. Samuel Blair preached here, in connection with Londonderry, Pa. In 1749," the *Historical Collections* go on, "through the influence of Governor Belcher, a charter was obtained, in connection with Freehold and Allentown. From 1757 to 1785, it is believed that the Rev. Mr. McKnight, for most of the time, officiated as pastor." This account would place the time of the erection of the

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present church at 1823, when the Reverend Nathaniel A. Pratt took charge but just the same Kobbé, who did much traveling to get his information years ago, jotted down 1821, and we would rather err on his side.

The name of Pastor McKnight was first heard, you remember, in connection with the controversy down at Cranbury and Allentown as to where the preacher should live. After he left Allentown, he took up his work at Shrewsbury and Middletown Point, it was pointed out. He was a Tory, it was further noted, and his church was burned but we could find no authentic record of which church was destroyed. If the present church wasn't put up until 1821 or 1823, there was a possibility that the old one, erected in 1727, had been wrecked in a blaze such as was attempted at Christ Church. At least Mr. McKnight was taken in charge by British order for his sentiments, too loudly expressed.

Saltar, in his writings concerning Monmouth and Ocean Counties, has said that the pastor preached along the shore in the middle 1700's, was taxed in Upper Freehold Township in 1758 and died in 1778. There was a Captain Richard McKnight in the Monmouth Militia of 1778 with a Joseph McKnight listed as a private. "A member of this family," says Saltar, founded a hotel at Long Branch in the early 1700's. The Reverend Frank R. Symmes, whose *History of the Old Tennent Church* is a thoroughgoing work, says nothing to indicate that the church said to have been burned by Redcoats was the one at Shrewsbury. He has admitted that definite data concerning the organization of the Presbyterian church there was always meager and unsatisfactory and says that worshipers may then have gone to Old Scots for a time.

"But preaching services must have been held and a nucleus begun before or by 1734," he conjectures, "for in that year a call from the people of Shrewsbury and Middletown was made to Samuel Blair, a native of Ireland, and a student of the Log College; and he settled among them. The church was comparatively weak, and for many years of slow growth. It suffered much from long interims of settled pastors: but a

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few faithful souls kept the little flame of sanctuary worship alive."

Mr. Symmes, referring to Mr. McKnight as "preacher and martyr patriot," offers a reminder that the fiery pioneer pastor is buried in Trinity Churchyard, New York City. Kobbé declares that the Reverend John Tennent, of Old Scots, and later the new and first church on White Hill, now Tennent, "was one of the first ministers who had charge after the construction of the Presbyterian church" at Shrewsbury. Through it all, it is obvious that though the past of the little church is as obscure as the historian declares his engraving of Old Christ Church to be, it was an important interval during stormy days, as vital as any of the "three venerable churches within one hundred yards of each other, each surrounded by an old church-yard."

Recalling the past might have had little, beyond a few details, to do with the Allen house, declared to be the oldest building in Shrewsbury, if on one of our journeys to Sandy Hook, Alden Cottrell hadn't noticed that the house was open. For some time it had been for rent, we had been told before, a lady at the post office declaring she thought we must be looking for an old house further down the road when she heard the nature of the information we were seeking. Doors and windows were wide, as carpenters and painters made the place ready for a new tenant, an antique expert whom we envied immediately.

"Maybe I wouldn't like to live in a house with as much tradition and background as that," said Alden, and we seconded his motion, in spite of our living and writing in the Guard House across another King's Highway from The Indian King, the colonial tavern.

Mr. Saltar, in his voluminous notes on early Monmouth families, devoted more than a page of fine print to the Allens. John Allen, he recorded, with Robert Taylor, purchased a share of land among original purchasers named in 1667, the date that is to be found upon the Allen house on the northwest of the Four Corners. George Allen also purchased a share

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in 1670. Another Allen, Jedediah, bought George Almy's share of Monmouth land in 1683. George Allen married Elizabeth Hulett in Shrewsbury in 1694. John, Saltar concluded, was probably the same Allen named in records of the Friends at Newport, Rhode Island, when he married Elizabeth Bacon in 1650. "And he may have been the same John Allen named a few years previous at Rohoboth, Massachusetts, where in 1644 in allotment of town lots he was given lot Number 42," continues the man who kept notes on such matters for years on end, tracing the family back to Sandwich and Plymouth.

"Ralph Allen, one of the persecuted Quakers, said also to have been a son of the first George of Sandwich," he says, "had descendants who came to Monmouth, some of whom became quite noted." Thus the Allens run on, figuring in everything from the naming of Allentown, the deliberations of the colonial assembly of 1703 and affairs of the Presbyterian church at Woodbridge to engagements of the Revolution in which there were some on both sides. Thus the Allens were as important as Shrewsbury from the first and as interesting as the house for, if its date is authentic, as it probably is, it is older than even the Revell house in Burlington.

Writing of the house itself in 1888, Gustav Kobbé said "it is gambrel-roofed, and has an old-time look notwithstanding the store which has been attached to the eastern end." There was a show-window, independent of the house, when we were there, but the removal of the store had restored more than the "old-time look." Even the workmen knew snatches of the legends that hovered around it and some of them eagerly showed us a wooden lock, the huge fireplace in the kitchen, the original floor-boards in many of the rooms, the "h" and "l" hinges on paneled cupboards and even the secret compartment beside an upstairs hearth. Here, many years ago, the skeleton of a man was found, they said.

As we hurried about, avidly exclaiming over one room and then another, the owner, Mr. George Silver, appeared. At first a little uncertain about strangers who seemed to have taken such liberties, he warmed to the discussion of legends and

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scenes of former years. Mr. Silver didn't know whether the story we had heard had lately narrowed itself down to one skeleton in the closet but he knew about the Indian trail, the toll-gate at the corner and the store which once extended over the present sidewalk, necessitating a crossing of a platform by passers-by.

During part of the Revolution, the Allen house served as a tavern, the story goes. Tory Refugees made several raids in Shrewsbury, "not scrupling to rob and even murder their former fellow-townsmen," says one account. The Allen house was the scene of one of their bloodiest encounters. Twelve Virginia Continentals, a corporal's guard, were quartered at the tavern for the protection of the village. Five Refugees, coming over from the Hook, hid among the tombstones on the south side of Christ Church, watching their opportunity.

The guard had so far relaxed its vigilance that muskets had been stacked in the north room on the lower floor and was taking an afternoon siesta somewhere on the grounds. Then, when there was no one in the road to give them away, the Tories dashed through the front door of the inn, "their leader the moment they entered throwing his arms around the stack of muskets and locking them in his firm embrace. The Continentals, hearing the noise, rushed into the house unarmed, almost upon the bayonets of the Tories."

One of the Virginians was thrown down and pinned to the floor "where he died without a struggle." Two others received thrusts from which they died. One staggered out the door "and a short distance up the Red Bank turnpike where he fell at the foot of a tree by the roadside," according to our trustworthy Gustav. Another ran a short distance down the Tinton Falls Road, "where he was found by George White, a Quaker, who bore him to his house and watched at his bedside till he expired at midnight." The rest of the guard, some wounded and all unarmed, surrendered, were taken to Sandy Hook and from there to New York where they were imprisoned in one of the infamous sugar-houses.

There should be little doubt about the story, for Kobbé,

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who wrote it down, had these and other details from the son of George White. The father of the owner of the Allen house at that time declared he had tried in every way to obliterate the bloodstains from the floor, even planing the boards. When the shuddersome marks of the encounter were still evident, he laid another floor on top. Three of the Refugees who took part in the raid, named by the chronicler as Joseph Price, Robert Pattison and Clayton Tilton, came back to Shrewsbury after the war, despite the intense feeling against them, even in this Tory town. Price talked about what part he had played more readily than the rest and once, not realizing that Mr. White had stood guard at a victim's deathbed, gave him the full particulars.

Many of Shrewsbury's foremost pioneers were, at best, reluctant patriots. Many Quakers stayed at home, maintaining their principles and refusing a part in the struggle that swirled all about them. Today the old churches, the Meeting House, the old dwelling that was a tavern and is a dwelling again with the old trees on every hand, keep Shrewsbury for the most part as it was in the beginning. Even if you go over toward the Hook, toward the Freehold that was Monmouth Court House, or toward the shore, the echoes of your footfalls might well be the ghostly tread of hundreds upon hundreds of early settlers who came that way centuries ago.

Even if you venture toward Tinton Falls, once Tintern Falls, you will come upon the names of James and Henry Leonard, for whom Leonardsville was named, and, as in every direction, there is a throwback to Shrewsbury Towne. For the stone under the Litany desk before the Chancel in Old Christ Church bears the name of Henry, son of Henry and Euthamiea Arabella Leonard, with the date: 1761.

Chapter 19

TODAY IS YESTERDAY: SANDY HOOK

“ . . . Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears,
The sound of something purring at his heels;
Full fast he flies, and dares not look behind him,
Till out of breath he overtakes his fellows . . . ”

—ROBERT BLAIR: 1699-1746

“MY GRANDMOTHER told me that her Uncle Levi used to say that his great-grandmother, Penelope Stout, holding him on her knee, used to take off her cap and show him the place where her hair never grew after the Indians almost scalped her.”

Thus, at Hopewell, Miss Susan Weart reached back across the years to the first recorded shipwreck on Sandy Hook in 1620 when “among the passengers was a Dutch woman and her husband, whose name is not known.” The woman, born in Amsterdam in 1602, was the mother of all the Stouts. Sandy Hook had been discovered by Henry Hudson only eleven years before her tragic arrival.

“It was on the afternoon of Thursday, September 3, 1609, that the eyes of the natives, then inhabiting the shores of Sandy Hook, were directed in wonder and admiration towards an European vessel entering the bay from the broad expanse of ocean which constituted the eastern boundary of their world,” wrote William A. Whitehead in his *East Jersey under the Proprietary Governments*, published in 1846. Mr. Whitehead imagined the emotions of the Indians so well that he must be quoted further.

“Uncertain were they,” he continued, “whether what they beheld was a monster of the deep, or an apparition from the world of spirits, but as the mysterious object drew nearer, they were led finally to regard it as a mighty canoe under the guidance of the Great Spirit, and navigated by inferior divinities.”

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Vanderdonk, writing in 1650, declared he had seen and talked with Indians who were on the Hook at the time of Hudson's arrival and they maintained that they had no knowledge of any previous visit by white men. John Verrazzano had been there in 1523 as had Sebastian Cabot in 1498 and Stephen Gomez about a year later than Verrazzano, perhaps the only one who did more than take soundings.

It has been suggested that Verrazzano referred to the neighborhood of the Hook when he wrote a letter to Francis I, after his voyage under the flag of France, saying:

"We found a very pleasant situation among some steep hills, through which a very large river, deep at its mouth, forced its way to the sea; from the sea to the estuary of the river any ship heavily laden might pass without the help of tide, which rises eight feet. But as we were riding at anchor in a good berth, we would not venture up in our vessel without a knowledge of the mouth; therefore we took the boat, and entering the river we found the country on its banks well peopled, the inhabitants not differing much from the others, being dressed out with the feathers of birds of various colors. They came towards us with evident delight, raising loud shouts of admiration, and showing us where we could most securely land with our boat . . ."

Verrazzano continues in the same vein, indicating that he and his men had as much fun as the Indians until the wind changed and they had to get back to the ship. "All of a sudden," reads the Cogswell translation, differing from the older one of Hackluyt, "as is wont to happen to navigators, a violent contrary wind blew in from the sea, and forced us to return to our ship, greatly regretting to leave this region, which seemed so commodious and delightful, and which we supposed must also contain great riches, as the hills showed many indications of minerals."

The old axiom says that an Indian never forgets. However, Vanderdonk, buzzing around for interviews eighty-five years later, couldn't find one who knew anything about Verrazzano's good-will tour. Hudson, with his eighty-ton *Half*

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Moon thought to be a celestial craft until members of the crew repaid propitiatory gifts by passing bottled madness, was the only one they recalled. Tribes used to wander, authorities declare, and the passage of years might have brought natives from far away to Sandy Hook, replacing those who rode out from both shores to welcome Verrazanno. It is obvious that there was a little shifting between 1609 and 1620, too, for the Indians who set up a party for Henry Hudson very nearly put a quietus on all the interesting things the Stouts were going to do by hitting Penelope over the head.

Hudson's mate, Juet, was acting as correspondent for the home-town papers and allowed little to escape his Journal. The landing party was greeted by a delegation of men, women and children who had all kinds of things for sale cheap, tobacco, grapes, beans, oysters and even what they thought were black currants, but were probably huckleberries, all procured at a mere trifle, maybe a knife, a couple of beads and a belt buckle. There was anything but a show of friendship for Penelope and her first husband when they came along, you remember, but poor Henry Hudson might have found a better death on the Hook, as far as that goes. His crew mutinied and forced him to land at Dartmouth, where King James found out what wonderful things they had seen and delayed his return to Holland long enough to break him.

Smith dates the legend as late as 1669 and if he's right the Indians had time to change their dispositions even more. But the chief consideration now is Sandy Hook, described by Gordon as "a sandy beach, extending northward, from old Shrewsbury inlet," and declared in the *Historical Collections* to be "four and a quarter miles in length" and varying "from a quarter to a mile in width." "It is a low, sandy tract," the same reporters continued, "a great part of it covered with low trees and shrubs, principally red cedar, interspersed with holly and wild cherry. . . . There are upon it two dwellings, and a lighthouse near its northern extremity."

We'll discount the houses, for today Sandy Hook is a

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military reservation, Fort Hancock, and anything akin to battlements and fortifications must be out of the discussion permanently. However, despite the army supervision or perhaps because of its protection, Sandy Hook today is little different from the Hook of long ago. The low trees and shrubs, the red cedar and wild cherry trees have grown, untroubled, to unbelievable proportion and profusion. As for holly, here within ten miles of New York where a spit of sand looks across to Coney Island, Brooklyn and Manhattan, there is a stand of lovely trees, virtually a forest more than two miles long and at least a century old, almost without equal anywhere.

Our old friend Gustav Kobbé, writing in the 1880's, caught the picture of yesterday and today as the Hook presents it, saying, "It is a primeval wilderness—within short sailing distance from New York—a dreary waste of sand, here heaped up in dunes, there scooped out in hollows by the wind, with storm-twisted cedars and coarse salt grasses, bidding defiance to three thousand miles of ocean, which of a winter's storm hurls its water in crashing confusion against this solitary outpost of the mainland."

Nothing more accurate or more descriptive could be said today.

It was the hollies that took us to the Hook. Someone had written Charles P. Wilbur, the New Jersey forester, a letter, saying he thought more people should know about that stand of trees. Alden Cottrell was assigned to look them over, measure them and determine their age. He was interested in the trees, we were interested in the Hook, its legends, all that had happened there. And so, one morning early, even as the October fog was lifting, we set out.

Arrangements had been made ahead of time, of course, as they must be in these days of wars and rumors of wars. Once before we had gone as far as the gate on the entrance road, not far from the old Highland Beach depot, armed with correspondence from Alden's files, only to learn that the adjutant wasn't on duty and that it would be much better to

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return when someone could assure the guard that strangers who said they wanted to look at trees and other things didn't care anything at all about military secrets. Later, when details had been straightened out, a pass was given us at the gate and an M.P. at headquarters and there was no further difficulty. Restricted areas are posted, and provided one has a legitimate interest in the Hook and gets permission in advance, he should have a good time.

All the Indians, even at the time of Henry Hudson's call, weren't friendly. You could go so far, and no farther, with an Indian, just as one can go so far and not an inch beyond that on the Hook today. Two days after Hudson's men purchased souvenirs with next to nothing, John Coleman, one of the crew, decided with four others to take a small boat and go sight-seeing along the main coast beyond. The Sunday excursion ended when John stopped an arrow and died, his companions naming the place Coleman's Point, which some say was the tip of the Hook itself and others Point Comfort on the west shore of the bay.

The first structure we wanted to see was the lighthouse, and our policeman, Private John Henning, wanted to see it, too, for although he had been on duty on the reservation some little time, much of it on M.P. patrol, he had never gone that far. The light, the oldest in the United States, is a tower of stone, painted white, ninety feet high and with walls that are eight feet thick at the base. The beam first went groping through the gloom on Monday, June 18, 1764.

Hugo Carlson was the keeper when we were there. A Swede who had gone to New Hampshire as a boy, he and his wife had come but recently from service on the New England coast and were concerned by reports of the storm which, among other things, had toppled one light into the sea. Old lighthouses have no elevator service. So, with Mr. Carlson's permission, the door was unlocked and we climbed our way to the top, the first of a number of similar long hauls that awaited us on the Hook. On the way up the countless steps, we saw that the estimates as far as the wall was concerned

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were accurate enough—the windows winding with the stairs were actually passageways at the bottom.

We asked Mr. Carlson about the tradition of a secret cellar under the lighthouse, which, opened in the 1860's, was said to have revealed a skeleton seated before a rude fireplace. Although he hadn't been in New Jersey long, the keeper said he had heard the tale but believed it concerned the cellar of the keeper's house that had been removed. "I don't think there's a cellar under the light," he said, showing us the stones outlining the keeper's cottage that stood beside the beacon until 1883. "There was a cellar there," he said, "but it has been filled in, you see."

Mr. Carlson said he had been interested in determining if the lighthouse had been fortified by the British during the Revolution.

That, of course, has been always a sensible conclusion. Many of the raids staged by Tories and Refugees over in the neighborhood of Shrewsbury, Tinton Falls and Middletown were planned at what was known as the Lighthouse Fort, or Refugees' Town, which served as a base of operations. The Loyalists, better organized on the Hook than anywhere else, were directed by the associated board formally headed by Governor William Franklin. Fifty years ago what was left of log fortifications were visible east of the beacon.

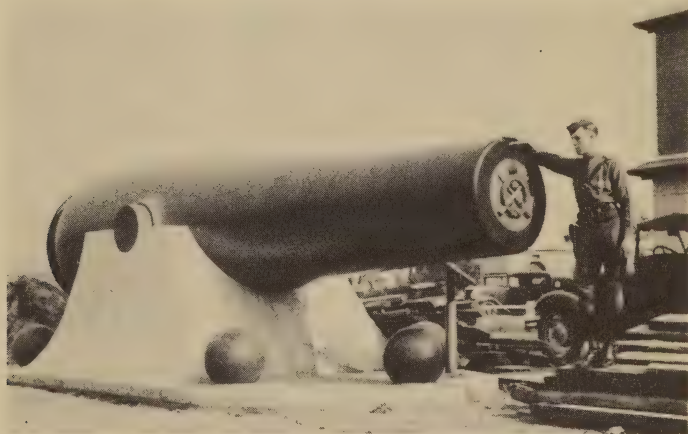
Once an attack was made upon the Lighthouse Fort by General David Forman and the Monmouth County Militia who struggled far out on the Hook with two six-pounders. "But," say the historians, "their artillery being too light, and a British armed vessel approaching, they were obliged to retreat."

Sandy Hook was purchased by Richard Hartshorne, "an early settler of Middletown," whose descendants held title to it until 1816, when, according to Messrs. Barber and Howe, the United States, who had previously owned 125 acres, where the lighthouse is, purchased the remaining portion.

Other sources, telling how the lighthouse was originally constructed by New York's pioneer merchants and ceded to



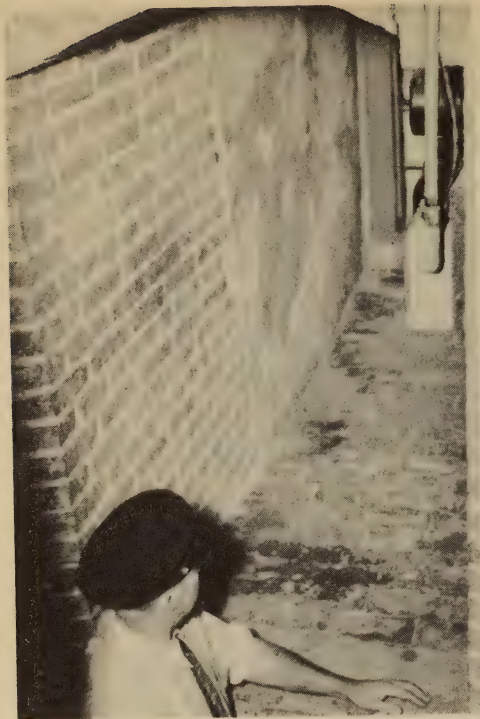
Kenneth Rodger, the coast-guard observer, and Jim Gould, the telegrapher on top of the Western Union tower on Sandy Hook.



Pvt. John Henning, at Sandy Hook, stands beside one of the two largest muzzle-loading cast-iron guns ever made.



The Western Union tower, at Sandy Hook, looks down on the ever-changing shoreline. This view is from the old Postal Telegraph tower, now used by the U.S. Army in maneuvers.



"If you don't think the walls are eight feet thick," said Hugo Carlson, keeper of Sandy Hook Light, "just take a look."



Sandy Hook Light, the oldest lighthouse in operation in the country, first sent out its beam in 1764.



The Hon. Hamilton Douglass Haliburton, son of the Earl of Morton, twelve young gentlemen and a common sailor, perished where this monument has been erected on the Hook, in 1783, while looking for deserters.

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the United States by the State of New York in 1790, show some variation. They declare that Mr. Hartshorne sold land on the Hook, beyond the light to the tip, February 26, 1806, for \$3,750, disposing of the rest June 10, 1817, for \$20,000. By this time events of two wars had shown the country that the Hook was too valuable a location for defense purposes, to be privately owned.

Mr. Hartshorne may have received the worth of his holdings in the end but prior to that he had had his own troubles. As has been pointed out before, when Indians sold land they couldn't understand that they had sold their rights to hunt and fish as well. Thus there is a curious document concerning Sandy Hook and its real estate and riparian rights. Dated August 8, 1678, it reads:

"Whereas the Indians pretend that formerly, when they sold all the land upon Sandy Hook, they did not sell, or did except, liberty to get plumbs, or to say the Indians should have liberty to go on Sandy Hook to get plumbs when they please, and to hunt upon the land, and fish, and to take dry trees that suited them for cannows. Now know all men by these presents, that I, Richard Hartshorn, of Portland, in the county of Monmouth, in East Jersey, for peace and quietness sake, and to the end there may be no cause of trouble with the Indians, and that I may not for the future have any trouble with them as formerly I had, in their doggs killing my sheep, and their hunting on my lands, and their fishing, I have agreed as followeth:

"These presents witnesseth, that I, Vowavapon, Hendricks, the Indians sonn, having all the liberty and privileges of pluming on Sandy Hook, hunting, fishing, fouling, getting cannows, etc., by these presents give, grant, bargain, sell, unto Richard Hartshorn, his heirs, and assigns forever, all the liberty and privilege of pluming, fishing, fowling, hunting, and howsoever reserved and excepted by the Indians for him, the said Richard Hartshorn, his heirs and assigns, to have, hould, possess, and injoy forever, to say that no Indian, or Indians, shall or hath no pretense to lands or timber, liberty, privileges, on no pretense whatsoever on any part or parcell of land, belonging to the said Richard Hartshorn, to say, Sandy Hook or land adjoining to it, in consideration the said Hartshorn hath paid unto the said Vowavapon thirteen shillings money; and I, the said Vowavapon, do acknowledge to have received thirteen shillings by these presents. Witness my hand and seal."

Perhaps it was worth thirteen shillings to wade through all those words. It must have sounded impressive to Vowavapon

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and Tocus, who affixed their marks, duly witnessed by John Stout, we hope with a straight face.

We left the keeper of the light reluctantly and moved on beyond the parade ground. There, as we beheld one of the two largest muzzle-loading cast-iron guns ever made, we couldn't help thinking of General Forman trudging out the dreary stretch with his two six-pounders. This weapon which, sighted through a telescope, was supposed to have frightened away any return fire, was a twenty-inch smooth bore, made from Rodman's plan of casting guns by cooling them from the interior.

Naturally we exclaimed over its size, its weight of 115,000 pounds and the revelation that two hundred pounds of powder were necessary to fire a single ball. Planned by Captain Rodman in 1861 but not actually cast until 1864, this gargantuan weapon had only one duplicate, at Fort Hamilton, New York, and this, we were told, was the lone survivor. The gun was a product of the Fort Pitt Foundry, Pittsburgh, and only a few years later, its inscription pointed out, maximum developments of muzzle-loading were put in the shade by breech-loading types.

Unquestionably such a giant would have frightened Sir Henry Clinton, retreating down the Hook from the field at Monmouth to transports and men-of-war, flying the Royal George and awaiting the troops that marched over a pontoon bridge in the Navesink and on toward the Horseshoe. That was July, 1778, ninety years too soon for anything like that.

Two years earlier, in 1776, Captain John Conover stole out along the Hook and gaining the top of the lighthouse, smashed the lamp so that it couldn't serve as a guide to hostile ships. He was caught, the story goes, and prepared for the noose on the yardarm of a British ship, was saved at a last moment and clapped in a sugar-house dungeon in New York instead. We wanted to discover some trace of a little graveyard where castaways, soldiers and old-timers of the sea were said to have been buried, years ago, beside the graves of Cap-

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tain Swain, two of his sons and sailors, shipwrecked on the Hook in the early 1800's, but restricted areas seemed to be in that direction.

Raids, conducted from the Hook as a headquarters of the Board of Associated Loyalists, gave New Jersey the certainty of being remembered as the colony that suffered most in the Revolution, and Monmouth County as the center of battle, murder and sudden death. The Refugees who operated under Governor Franklin were, for the most part, a different sort than those who set fires and stole cattle and played bloody pranks in the pine country—these who schemed at the fortified settlement in the shadow of the lighthouse and within sight of British ships of war were neighbors loyal to their King returning to familiar villages and barnyards to inflict penalties on neighbors who had impudently repudiated their sovereign.

There are countless records of such clashes which make America's Revolution akin to those before and after, even those we know with causes more up-to-date, fought for with more up-to-date weapons. It was on June 3, 1778 that a party of seventy "Greens" came over from the Hook, landed near Major Kearney's, near Keyport, made a prisoner of John Burrows and burned his mills and storehouses. "They also took prisoners Lieutenant Colonel Smock, Captain Christopher Little, Mr. Joseph Wall, Captain Joseph Covenhoven and several other persons, and killed Messrs. Pearce and Van Brockle and wounded another man mortally. Having completed this and several other barbarities they precipitately returned the same morning to give an account of their abominable deeds to their bloody employers. A number of these gentry," the account adds significantly, "were formerly inhabitants of that neighborhood."

The "Greens" were Refugees, or Loyalists, sometimes called the New Jersey Royal Volunteers, who, under the command of General Cortlandt Skinner, sometimes laid waste to whole slices of the country with a band estimated at seven and eight hundred. In 1779, 1780, 1781 and 1782, that sort of

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thing was still going on, despite the efforts of the rebel militia. The plunderers had a different name for their depredations: picarooning expeditions. It does sound a bit more polite but there was nothing polite in what happened when notable leaders were hauled away under guard, when sheep were driven into the woods, when cattle were shot in their stalls and loot consisting of continental money, firearms, clothing and family heirlooms was taken. On one occasion looters from the Hook came over and invaded the Pleasant Valley, loading up five sleighs with pilfered treasures and driving off with twenty horses. On others, only the allegiance feigned by those who chose to remain in their homes saved lives and possessions until the war was over.

We moved on out to the tip where, beyond an Ordnance Department locomotive, idling on the tracks, we came upon the headquarters of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's weather bureau and two towers, one labeled Postal Telegraph and the other Western Union. Weather Bureau men aided in opening the door of the Postal Telegraph tower, nailed shut so that children of the post officers wouldn't go climbing on the stairs after the observatory had been turned over to the army for azimuth readings.

Here we had our second climb, the faithful Private Henning beside us. The tower was full of flies, buzzing at every window as we mounted the steps to a little room, attained through a trap door. There was evidence that the tiny compartment had not been used since over a year before. There were newspapers of December, 1937, an old-fashioned pot-bellied stove as rusted as the pipe above it down which rain had trickled in the storm, a radio, a bucket of coal and a clock on the wall which had stopped at twenty to five, months before.

"That storm blasted this place with a sixty-six-mile wind," our policeman informed us. "Some of us were out in it, trying to save some of the boats. That one down there was smashed beyond repair." We looked down and saw it, its hull in splinters where it had been cast upon the rocks.

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"Whoever was up here certainly dug their toes in their shoes," Ty Fogg said.

"Nobody was up here—but they were on duty up there in the Western Union tower," our soldier said. "There's been worse wind than that out here, they said. Once there was a seventy-eight-mile gale!"

Despite the amusing "invitation" of the sign on the ground-floor door of the second tower, "Office On The Top Floor," we were not inclined to follow Alden Cottrell, at first. But it was well that we tackled the eighty-eight-foot groan, for high in an octagonal room, through another trap door, we found Jim Gould, the telegraph man, and Kenneth Rodger, the Coast Guard watch, doing their work in the way it was done up there in the look-out long before the advent of radio.

Here, where once again today was yesterday and modern methods mixed with old, we looked down on a scene that would forever come to mind whenever storm warnings should go out from Sandy Hook, up or down the coast.

Jim Gould, who lives on the Hook, had been sighting ships, coming in and going out, for more than thirty years, using a long, powerful telescope poked through one of the slit-like peepholes built into each corner of the octagon. A groove was worn where the glass had been moved back and forth by Jim and the watchers who preceded him, scanning the doorway from the sea. Sam Phillips, who was off duty at the time, and who lives downstairs in the tower itself, had seen forty years of service in this business of sighting ships off the Hook, telegraphing news of their approach, transmitting their orders.

Wide-eyed, we gazed at another old coal-stove, ready for use, at the old clock ticking away on the wall, the box telephone and the speaking tube and the tiny shelves of books and records beyond the telegraph instruments. What seemed to be anachronism on every hand was accentuated by the fact that across the water were the sky havens of a new generation, that through the glass we could pick up the sign-boards at Coney and excursionists on the boardwalk.

If we had gazed down from a window or through the 'scope

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to see the old news service of the 1850's in operation we would not have been surprised. For the Western Union tower was the outgrowth of a system when a telegraph line from New York to Beacon Hill on the Highlands was extended to the Hook, "a fine wire being stretched across the river from Beacon Hill to a pole on the east bank of the Shrewsbury," as Kobbé says in his little red book. "When an incoming vessel was sighted, James Farrell, a noted surfman, put out to her through the surf. The captain threw a can, containing the news, in cipher, overboard. Farrell fished out the can, attached the cipher message to a carrier pigeon which bore it to the telegraph station (a mere shanty) on the Hook, whence it was telegraphed, via Beacon Hill to New York. This service was discontinued after the laying of the Atlantic cable."

A sparrow, trapped by its own audacity of investigation and winging its way wildly around and around the octagon, brought us back to the present.

"Ships out there used to get their orders from flags we wigwagged here," Jim Gould was saying. "It's got so now I can tell the majority of ships by their stacks without looking into the book."

We glanced through the book Jim referred to, one in which, on page after page, he had put down the insignia of hundreds of lines, using a pencil and colored crayons, with their identities noted beside each design. Close by the book were others containing international codes and other records. "We've got books here covering forty or fifty years," Jim told us, "and the closets downstairs are full. Why, we've got the weather records of twenty-five years—the weather bureau boys often come over to check them."

This tower, Jim said, wasn't the first one and wasn't much older than his time of service there, not more than five years older anyhow. The old tower, he said, is now part of a house he pointed out, looking down from the window. "The ocean was right outside here once," he confided, as we followed his gaze toward a shallow cove that fills at high tide. "Nearly everything's done by radio now—but we've still got the flags, just in case!"

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Sure enough, among the logs and records, were the old signal flags, carefully rolled away. "We thought all this went out long ago," we confessed. Jim Gould pushed back his cap and rubbed his leathery face with the back of a brown hand. "Oh, no," he said, smiling and shaking his head. "There's still tickers in all the offices doing any kind of marine business. The skippers out there want a person to see their ships—they want a sighting, small craft, tugs and all."

As for the Coast Guard, Kenneth Rodger said there had been a watch in one of the towers ever since the old days of the lifesaving crews. Jim heard something of interest from the direction-finder over his key and mounted the low platform which enables those not as tall as the Coast Guardsman to use the telescope with greater ease. A small radio set in a far corner went on with its whisper of dance music—except for that, our descent, reluctant as it was, seemed like climbing down from a lost era kept in camphor in a sky-loft.

Then, as we reached the ground, Jim Gould spoiled the illusion. He shouted down an order to the coal-man who had no intention of mounting all those steps.

On our way back our policeman told us snatches of a story which, when we had dug up the rest, linked Sandy Hook with the War of 1812. A newspaper published the facts in New York at the time under the general heading, "The War." Subtitled "A Coup de Main," it read:

"On Sunday morning, July 4th (1813) the fishing-smack *Yankee* was borrowed by Com. Lewis, who has command of the flotilla stationed at the Hook, for the purpose of taking by stratagem the sloop *Eagle*, tender to the *Poictiers* 74, cruising off and on Sandy Hook; which succeeded to a charm. A calf, a sheep and a goose were purchased, and secured on deck. Thirty men, well armed, were secreted in the cabin and fore-peak. Thus prepared, the *Yankee* stood out of Musquito cove, as if going on a fishing trip to the banks; three men only being on deck, with buff caps on. The *Eagle*, on perceiving the smack, immediately gave chase; and after coming up with her, and finding she had live stock on deck, ordered her to go down to the commodore, then five miles distant. The helmsman of the smack answered, 'Ay, ay, sir!' and apparently put up the helm for that purpose, which brought him alongside the *Eagle*, not three yards distant. The watchword, Lawrence, was then given, when the armed men rushed on deck, from their hiding-places, and poured into her a volley of musketry, which struck her crew with dismay, and drove them down so precipitately

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into the hold of the vessel, that they had not time to strike the colors. Seeing the enemy's deck clear, Sailing-master Percival, who commanded the expedition, ordered his men to cease firing; upon which one of the men came out of the enemy's hold, and struck the colors of the *Eagle*. She had on board a thirty-two-pound howitzer, loaded with canister-shot; but, so sudden was the surprise, they had not time to discharge it. . . . The *Eagle*, with the prisoners, arrived off the Battery, in the afternoon, and landed the prisoners at Whitehall, amid the plaudits and shouts of thousands of spectators, assembled on the Battery to celebrate the anniversary of our independence. . . ."

This account, including details concerning the dead and wounded and the subsequent burial of Mr. Price, a midshipman, in New York, and Mr. Morris, master's mate of the *Poictiers*, at Sandy Hook, isn't quite as colorful as that in Mr. Kobbé's *Jersey Coast and Pines* which speaks of the principal of the encounters as "Mad Jack Percival," later Commodore, who played the role of "a half-witted boor." One of the three who remained on the deck of the *Yankee*, he is quoted as warning the master of the *Eagle* that "Dad's big molasses jug is on deck, and if you broke that he'd make you sorry for it!"

En route to headquarters and beyond toward the gate, we paused beside a monument which perhaps later was to bear some plaque describing its purpose. When we were there, nothing but the stone shaft near some discarded ties and rails of the former track marked the spot where, long before the New Jersey Southern Railroad carried through, there "stood an elegant monument to the memory of a young British officer and thirteen others, cast away in a snow-storm, in the war of the revolution. They were found frozen, and buried in one common grave."

When the tracks were removed, buttons from forgotten uniforms were found among the skeletons of those who were said to have come ashore from a British man-of-war, combing the hollies and cedars in search of deserters. It was in 1808 that "some barbarians, from a French vessel-of-war" landed and destroyed the original monument that bore this epitaph:

"Here lie the remains of the Honorable Hamilton Douglass Haliburton, son of Shoto Charles, Earl of Morton, and heir of the ancient family of

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Haliburton, of Pitcurr, in Scotland; who perished on this coast, with twelve more young gentlemen, and one common sailor, in the spirited discharge of duty, the 30th or 31st of December, 1783—born October the 10th, 1763: a youth who, in contempt of hardship and danger, though possessed of an ample fortune, served seven years in the British navy, with a manly courage. He seemed to be deserving of a better fate. To his dear memory, and that of his unfortunate companions, this monumental stone is erected, by his unhappy mother, Katherine, Countess Dowager of Morton.”

The names of the victims are said to have been subscribed, including James Champion, Lieutenant of Marines; Alexander Johnston, George Paddy and Robert Heywood, Midshipmen; Charles Gascoigne, Andrew Hamilton, William Scott, David Reddie, William Tomlinson, John McChair, William Spray and Robert Wood, listed as young gentlemen, and finally, George Towers, the sailor. Perhaps the inscription, when it is added, will include the full text from *Historical Collections* reading, at the bottom, “Cast away, in pursuit of deserters; all found dead, and buried in this grave. Of his Britannic majesty’s ship *Assistance*: Mr. Halliburton, First Lieutenant.”

Leaving the monument, we made an effort to find what was said to be the only pine tree on the Hook fifty years ago. They used to locate it beyond a meadow that was approximately a mile up from the old river pier. This, they said, was Captain Kidd’s meadow, just as the pine was Kidd’s Tree in days when many, armed with picks and spades, sought pirate’s gold beneath it. But, though we could not get beyond the meadow’s overflow, covering the rustic Scotland Trail cut through by a former C.C.C. project, the lone pine seemed to have vanished as effectively as pilot lookouts who used to shinny into its branches to keep their masters, up at the Cove House, informed of incoming ships.

The boarding-house days on Spermacetti Cove, named for a whale washed up in 1668, were gone, too. So were the clammers’ scows, the days of the first electricity wired to five buoys in Gedney Channel, fish stories equal to those of Henry Hudson’s catch of mullets and rays “which four men had to haul aboard,” old Highland Beach “designed for family parties” with steam launches in the Navesink and Shrews-

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bury, sailboats, hammocks, croquet courts and stages for twelve at five dollars per afternoon. Somehow we felt that ghosts were all about us, soldiers and sailors and pirates. Phantoms slipping along the shore to find it much as they left it amid the hollow boom of cannon and the clatter of musketry centuries ago, mingled with something that purred at our heels, seeking scenes that were gone forever. . . .

"Ghosts?" our policeman repeated. "No. Sometimes there's a fisherman with a special permit who waits till dark and then sneaks along through the fog where he's not allowed, but—say, were you forgetting about that holly?"

Chapter 20

TO HEAVEN AND BACK WITH MR. TENNENT

"Mortality, behold and fear!
What a change of flesh is here!
Think how many royal bones
Sleep within this heap of stones . . .

Here's a world of pomp and state,
Buried in dust, once dead by fate."

—BEAUMONT and FLETCHER: 1579-1625

THERE WAS that day when, carried away by epitaphs and thoughts of the departed great at Tennent, we left books and notes atop a tombstone, only to find them again, a full week after, in possession of a visitor in the bar-parlor of the inn at Englishtown.

There was another afternoon when the caretaker, a colored man who said he didn't know where Walter Ker's grave might be, looked up from his grass-cutting to say that anybody with sense would know that Molly Pitcher's Well was but a pretty fiction and that there was only a brook, or maybe a spring, instead.

There was the time when, at the end of a day's journeying, we took Ty Fogg to see the old Tennent Church for the first time and then watched him go happily balmy, raving about architecture, climbing memorial monuments and lying prone for angle-shots.

Finally, there was that night when we passed the rise of the hill where the Topanemus tombstones stood out in silhouette over the graves of persecuted Scotchmen and His Majesty's appointees and, coming upon Old Tennent by moonlight, concluded we had seen the ghost they used to talk about in Dr. Woodhull's days.

Time and again we've gone to Tennent, drawn there as if by some mysterious lodestone, and, as often, we have found

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many others similarly attracted, the licenses of their cars revealing, sometimes, that they have come from far away. Here, of course, were the beginnings of many things. Here, long before there was a suggestion of war, the forefathers of the midlands were building a new nation. Here today, as it was in the day of those pioneers whose works have lived long after them, as unflinching a witness of a decisive battle for freedom as it has become a shrine of pervading peace, the old church on White Hill stands, a "treasured heritage from stern and sturdy servants of God."

There are so many externals, however, that the visitor may go away without a glimpse of all that lies behind the names and dates on the stones, behind the colonial meeting house with the steeple that never owned a bell, beyond the legends that have gained or lost something in the telling or retelling or beyond the ancient oak, survivor of two that were there when the church was begun in 1751. For all that's to be read, or all the information that's to be had for the asking, many never get beyond the name, Old Tennent, to realize that here is what once was called the Old Scots Church, later on the Freehold Church, and, intermittently the New Meeting House, Woodhull's Church, and, very possibly, the Old Red Church. These very names would arouse curiosity, for behind them all is a challenge—a challenge to know where the first church was, if this was the "new," to know who Dr. Woodhull was and to find out if the church was painted anything but white in its service to generations. Casual wanderers find out that the church was eventually named for "the saintly John Tennent" and his brother, William, both pastors there, and sometimes let it go at that.

Those who are curious enough to ask about books will come upon the monumental history of Tennent Church published in 1904 by its fifteenth pastor, the Reverend Frank R. Symmes. But again, many of these will not be sufficiently curious to burrow through pages of exact and accurate research and writing of this painstaking pastor who found time in the midst of "busy pastoral and ministerial duties" to fit

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together kaleidoscopic details from an impressive collection of source-books, minutes of synods and Presbyteries and memoirs of pastors or genealogical papers. Too many have become a part of the fever of modern living to note more than dates and names on the Tennent tombstones to catch the throbbing of "the proof positive of the sacred past speaking to the observing present." Too many others who exclaim over "such a grand old church" forget that Tennent, in use a quarter of a century before the Declaration of Independence was written, was even then a monument to rugged decades that had centered momentous days and dynamic happenings at White Hill.

This was the heart of the Scotch country in New Jersey, the New Aberdeen and the refuge to which many of those persecuted for a war on prelacy in their homeland joined prisoners who survived to welcome exile in a strange land. This was the far-away described by Pastor Tennent, the Reverend William, when he wrote in a letter of 1744 that the church and settlement was "the first in East Jersey, on the west side of the Raritan River, which was settled with a gospel ministry. This was owing," he said, "to the agency of some Scotch people who came to it. Among them there was none so painful in this blessed undertaking," he continued, "as one Walter Ker, who in the year 1685, for his faithful and conscientious adherence to God and His truth, as professed by the Church of Scotland, was there apprehended and sent to this country, under a sentence of perpetual banishment. By which," the pastor adds, "it appears that the Devil and his instruments lost their aim in sending him from home, where it is unlikely he could ever have been so serviceable to Christ's kingdom as he has been here."

Thus Walter Ker, so often called the Father of Old Tennent, and his associates, some Covenanters who had been sold as slaves, clapped in prisons and set upon by soldiers of King Charles, fled to America. Walter himself may have been a passenger on the *Henry and Francis* chartered by George Scot, laird of Pitlochrie, to provide a way of escape for as

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many as the ship would accommodate to the plantations of East Jersey. That was an ugly voyage, with two hundred fugitives embarking at Leith in September, 1685, set upon as they huddled together for worship below-decks, unceremoniously tossed into the sea when they died of fever, and signed to work out their passage money before they sighted the uncertain shores of their refuge a hundred days after sails were set. Scot and his wife were among those who perished, some sixty in all, and the others, after an argument by James Johnstone, later the helpmeet of Scot's daughter and a pioneer at Jamesburg, came to East Jersey when the wind decided the issue, disdaining both Virginia and Jamaica. There is little eloquence in tombstones for any of this for even the grave of Walter Ker is a half mile east of Old Tennent on the brow of a hill called Locust Grove.

For that matter, the stones at Tennent tell only part of the tale. Walter Ker, his wife, Margaret, and another Margaret, the wife of Joseph, are buried apart on the wooded hill. At a point about a half-mile east of Perrineville, on a farm, are what's left of the stones marking the graves of the Watsons and "Kears." On the old Baird farm near Manalapan Church are the Cooks, more than a dozen of them, all of whom improved, rather than spoiled, the broth of those Scotch pioneers. The Rheas lie in what was a family graveyard on the old Denise farm near Freehold and at what was known as Miller's Factory or Blain's Mills, are Prestons and Formans. More Formans lie buried in a family enclosure on a hill two miles to the east of Freehold, with Maddocks and others. Finally, there's Wyckoff Hill, more than a mile north of Freehold, and here with the Wyckoffs who became Wicoffs, or the reverse, are Formans, Barcalows, Williamsons and Cowenhovens. A little of what was mortal of the forebears of principal families of the midlands remain in forgotten fields although in recent years many of their stones have been taken, like the Stelles', to new refuge at Old Tennent.

Names in Old Tennent and in the farmyard corners in sight of the church are those of refugees from religious per-

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secution who blazed trails in earliest days from Raritan Bay to Free Hill, the site of Old Scots Meeting House, where we stumbled on the little enclosure even as our midlands journeys began, when a farmhouse water tower gave a steeple's invitation. That many of the Scotch came to East Jersey more by accident than design, no matter what their intention was, seems to have been a conclusion long ago, based not only on what happened aboard the *Henry and Francis* but also on the *Caledonia*, stranded in Amboy Bay in the 1700's and visible more than a century after, yielding the makings of walking sticks for those who were history-minded. The Scotch were soon joined by French Huguenots, members of the Reformed Church, and English Presbyterians, but that was after things had been humming some time in New Aberdeen, now Matawan, long after regular services at Old Scots had followed house-to-house meetings like the conventicles at home. The point is this: To look upon Old Tennent now is to consider more than dates and important names in an ancient graveyard, a church declared to have been a hospital in the Battle of Monmouth, or scenes of the battle itself, turning point of the Revolution though it was. To look upon Old Tennent is to consider the Tennents and their time and to look back, reverently, on Old Scots, the meeting house of logs that must have been standing in 1700, or shortly after, now a site rimmed by orchards off the beaten paths.

Old Tennent has a Royal Charter—it took ten years to get but it was given by George II in 1750 in Governor Belcher's time. Those who visit the church today see a facsimile of the charter, covering not only Old Tennent, but the churches at Shrewsbury, Allentown, and Cranbury—and beside it they see something more, something that brings Old Scots, Free Hill, White Hill and Freehold down to the present with a bump: A picture of the former Prince of Wales and present Duke of Windsor, presented before he was King in the name of a namesake ancestor who stayed longer on the throne. They see, too, a facsimile of the seal adopted when the charter was given the Monmouth churches, a design memo-

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rializing religious liberty and including the "Burning Bush," symbol of the Scotch Church. This has been called the oldest known corporate seal of any American Presbyterian Church.

There are many treasures at Old Tennent to be shown those who linger long enough to ask about them. Many find the old box pews impressive in themselves. However, whenever we have been there we have attempted to imagine the charter members, leaders of the flock, sitting in them, before the memorial plates were added—for many notables, the country over, have honored pioneer ancestors in this appropriate way. Titles for pews were sold by formal documents "in consideration of the sum of eleven pounds, ten shillings New York currency" in some cases and by such titles John Little, Christopher Longstreet, Jonathan Forman, John Anderson, James Robinson, John Henderson, Stephen Pangburn, Robert Imlay and Tobias Polhemus sat there as the first trustees, listening to the Word of God, preached in fiery terms. John Little was a veteran of the French and Indian War, lived near Eatontown and represented the Shrewsbury Church. Christopher Longstreet also represented Shrewsbury, turning from the Dutch Reformed faith in which he had been known on Long Island, and later became a miller in Allentown. Jonathan Forman came from a section near Freehold once called Forman Neighborhood, or Forman Square. John Anderson was the son of another John, master of the *Unicorn* and, like John Little, a County judge. James Robinson was the man who deeded the site of old St. Peter's Church, Freehold, whose framework was brought down from Topanemus. John Henderson worshiped at Old Tennent more than forty years and wrote much of its history. Stephen Pangburn later went down to Manahawkin to establish a grist mill and Robert Imlay, recalled in the name of Imlaystown, was probably the son of Peter Imlay, who went before the courts of his day to have the Old Scots Meeting recorded. Tobias Polhemus, from Allentown, was a descendant of the Reverend Johannes Theodorus Polhemus, the Dutch Reformed divine of Brooklyn and Flatbush.

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Perhaps these are no more forgotten than the members of Old Tennent themselves, the Crawfords, Craigs, Reids, Bairds, McKnights, Rheas and others who paid from about ten pounds up for pews, according to their nearness to the elders' square, the lower desk behind it and the grand old paneled pulpit above. Thomas Davis and his son, John, for instance, were where they could see the Tennents go up and down the steps and so they paid seventeen pounds yearly. David and Peter Gordon paid similarly for the best view of the elders from the left. All this was in the second church on White Hill, or White Oak Hill, and although the families have gone to their reward, they are remembered in one of the finest examples of ecclesiastical architecture of colonial times, apart from all the traditions. The original shingles are still there, as well as the original beaded and paneled Jersey pine. William Redford Craig, the carpenter, gave and built the pulpit, Benjamin Van Cleve the latches, nails and hinges—and thus their personalities linger in the shrine with all the rest.

Visitors may remark what they call horrible heating arrangement, old-fashioned stoves linked with pipes that wander through the interior like suspended black reptiles, but they seldom recall that in early days there were no stoves at all, that old-time religion at Tennent was supposed to supply its own fire. Stoves were instruments of the devil and the faith was supposed to be sufficiently rugged to withstand hours-long sermons in a cold church with reminders of freezing temperatures outside in the tiny frosted panes.

Three little knobs in the center of the panels at the back of the pulpit may have been put there for decoration by Mr. Craig but the Reverend William Tennent found more practical use for them. When the weather was ordinary, in fact on almost any Sunday, the parson's hat could be discerned hanging from one. On warm Sundays, off came Mr. Tennet's coat, to be hung upon the second knob. When the Summer sun bore down upon the roof and the countryside was blanketed under hazy heat, off came the pastor's wig, to be suspended on the third. This is no mere story, for even Mr.

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Symmes made a note of it in his interweaving of certainties.

The parsonage of the old church is but a memory now. Revealed in a state of disrepair in a picture that hangs upon the church walls, it was located southeast of the church itself, about a mile and a half away, "a low building, large on the ground, with four lower rooms,—two on each side of the hall—with kitchen attached in the rear. Above was the attic room, sloping on one side with the rafters, and with a window facing the north, which, as is said, was used as a study both by Mr. Tennent and Mr. Woodhull." Fortunately no one was there when, during the Battle of Monmouth, "a round shot came through the roof into this room while the conflict raged furiously around the house and in the adjoining orchard."

Though the parsonage may have become bedraggled in its last days, it had had its moments, for even in 1795 there was considerable excitement about its repair and this was for "the comfort of Mr. Woodhull" who was William Tennent's successor. Here Mr. Tennent lived forty years and here his wife "took the care of his temporal concerns upon her, extricating him from debt, and by a happy union of prudence and economy, so managed all his worldly business that in a few years his circumstances became easy and comfortable." Here the Tennents entertained George Whitefield, the famous evangelist, and here David Brainerd and his Indian converts were visitors. It was John Brainerd, comforted at the parsonage "in his sadness and depression," who wrote that the Tennents were hosts to Governor Belcher and his wife overnight in October, 1749. At the last, in 1861, after the parsonage had served Mr. Woodhull forty more years, after the Civil War had recalled Revolutionary scenes, it was taken down.

Although the name, Tennent, has been given the old church deservedly, there were previous pastors serving at the first, second and third meeting houses. The Reverend John Boyd, whose ordination monument we found in the forsaken little plot up Marlboro way, was first, serving the log building that

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was known as Old Scots, no mere cabin but a structure of larger dimensions, they say, then the Log College that was to become Princeton University. The Reverend Joseph Morgan, probably a Welshman, was second pastor at Old Scots, and this was not long after Pastor Boyd's appointment there, for the Reverend John's zeal taxed his strength and he died at the age of twenty-nine as the Latin inscription on the monument at Old Scots declares. Mr. Morgan was there from 1708, the year of Mr. Boyd's death, till 1729: he was the man who rode through the country, preaching, taking the early fire of Old Scots through the wilderness "in a two wheeled cart or gig, probably the first thing of the kind brought into the country." Likewise it was the selfsame Mr. Morgan whose prayers were acceptable to the Indian king, Wequalia, executed for murder, and whose complaints that the congregation owed him two hundred pounds preceded his leave-taking, first to serve the old Dutch Reformed Church, at Marlboro, and later to work at Hopewell and Maidenhead. The congregation was so divided at Old Scots upon Mr. Morgan's departure that William Tennent wrote into his letter to Mr. Prince, of Boston, that he despaired of another pastor coming there.

Then came the first of the Tennents, the Reverend John. John's father, the Reverend William, the elder, had been a priest of the Church of England, just as Whitefield and so many others were, before their methods and beliefs brought them into disfavor with the mother church. John Tennent married the daughter of the Reverend Gilbert Kennedy and with her and their four sons, Gilbert, William, John and Charles, came to America in 1716, preaching in New York and Pennsylvania. Two years later he united with the Presbyterians and became the pastor of their church at Neshaminy in 1726. "Seeing the need of higher schools of learning for young men," as Mr. Symmes put it, "he erected an academy house, about twenty feet long and nearly as broad, built of logs, close to his own dwelling, and began his teaching." This was Log College, considered "the virtual beginning" of what is now Princeton.

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It was Walter Ker who went over to Neshaminy and induced John Tennent, son of the founder of Log College, to make a preaching visit to Old Scots. At the time young John was a student at his father's school, a young man with a deep conviction of sin, a chap who spent long nights "in doleful lamentations." Walter Ker went hunting for preaching timber in April, 1730, and in November of the same year the Presbytery met at Old Scots and ordained him, choosing him as pastor. William Tennent, the younger, who attended the ceremony with his brother, Gilbert, afterward wrote that John didn't want to accept the call, that he "was heartily sorry to go among them, for it seemed to him they were a people whom God had given up for their abuse of the Gospel." For all that, John made a successful "go" of it, preaching at Old Scots and the first church on White Hill, causing his hearers to cry out as he preached, for as William wrote, he at times saw both his brother, "the minister and people wet with their tears, as with a bedewing rain." "It was no uncommon thing to see persons in the time of hearing," wrote William pridefully, "sobbing as if their hearts would break, and some have been carried out of the assembly (being overcome) as if they had been dead."

This entry recalls the record of the Brainerds. It also brings to mind the work of Mr. Whitefield. In contributing a part to what was called "The Great Awakening" they burned themselves out. Only two years after Old Scots called John to serve, he died, a youth of twenty-five, and the congregation was "bereaved of the flour of Youth The most Labourious Successful well Quallified & pious Pastor this Age afforded." John died in 1732 and in 1733 his brother, William, took his place. If John's conviction of sin, his sorrow for a wicked world and his eloquent battle with the devil brought him to his grave in Old Scots at an early age, William's "intense application" as a student of theology all but cut him down before he started. William will ever be remembered for what has been called "the most prominent feature of his life . . . his remarkable and celebrated trance." For William surely went to Heaven and came back!

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William had studied under his father at Log College and then had gone to study for the ministry with his brother, Gilbert, who was pastor of a church at New Brunswick. It was there that it happened. So remarkable was all that occurred, quite suddenly and with more than community alarm, that even Elias Boudinot became interested in getting the facts and recording them with Dr. Thomas Henderson. Surely it was like old Elias to determine to get to the bottom of it! Perhaps if there had been columnists in Mr. Boudinot's day, he would have been one, perhaps of the Pepys variety. The compilers of the *Historical Collections* declared that Mr. Boudinot obtained most of his information from Mr. Woodhull, Mr. Tennent's successor, in a lengthy letter. Thus, beyond the stone that marks William Tennent's grave in the church he loved, as well as under the stone that shows where the elders of White Hill lie buried, there is the story of the Tennent who died not once but several times.

William was preparing for his examination by the Presbytery when "his application affected his health and brought on a pain in his breast and a slight hectic. He soon became emaciated, and at length was like a living skeleton." A young doctor, a close friend, was called but his ministrations accomplished nothing at all. Then came a morning when the skeleton, morose and poring over his books, seized with doubts "of his final happiness," began talking in Latin to his brother and stopped in the middle of a word. The conversation had to do with the state of his soul and it was too much. Poor William "fainted and died away."

"After the usual time, he was laid out on a board, according to the common practice of the country, and the neighborhood were invited to attend his funeral on the next day. In the evening his physician and friend returned from a ride in the country, and was afflicted beyond measure at the news of his death. He could not be persuaded that it was certain; and, on being told that one of the persons who had assisted in laying out the body thought he had observed a little tremor of the flesh under the arm, although the body was cold and stiff, he endeavored to ascertain the fact. He first put his own hand into warm water, to make it as sensible as possible, and then felt under the arm, and at the heart, and affirmed that he felt an unusual warmth, though no one else could. He had the body restored to a warm bed, and insisted that the people who had been invited

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to the funeral should be requested not to attend. To this the brother objected, as absurd,—the eyes being sunk, the lips discolored and the whole body cold and stiff. However, the doctor prevailed. . . .”

There is something more than appears in the terse account first published in the *Evangelical Intelligencer* in Philadelphia. A few years earlier the physician would have been worse than a witch doctor; as it was, he was taking long chances with his life in the profession. Here was a circle prepared for a funeral, a parson brother who disliked his plans disarranged, a company that felt it knew death when it saw it. No one guessed that William Tennent was merely visiting the angels, that his being, under discussion a moment before, had taken leave of his body. Only the doctor held fast to any kind of hope, a hope that was a combination of trust that he was right, and misgiving that he would be unable to withstand the opposition around him. He alone continued his experiments and “all probable means were used to discover symptoms of returning life.” The third day dawned and the physician, though he stayed by the bedside, began to lose heart through utter exhaustion.

When the people were again invited to attend the funeral and had assembled for the service, the doctor begged an hour more. He had discovered that “the tongue was much swollen, and threatened to crack.” Ointment was brought and applied with a feather. Gilbert Tennent came in and thought the doctor was offering food. Showing great annoyance, he said, “It is shameful to be feeding a lifeless corpse!” The funeral service was begun.

This was the moment when the body of William Tennent, stretched upon its board in the midst of lamentation, gave up “a dreadful groan” and then settled back as before. One can imagine the excitement. “This put an end to all thoughts of burying him,” says the contemporary account, with great restraint. Thereupon many willingly aided the doctor in employing all known methods of resuscitation. In another hour there was another groan and an hour after that, “a complete revival took place.”

But it wasn't a revival, nor was it complete. There were

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six weeks in which William Tennent was in a questionable state. However, after that his strength returned daily and at the end of a year, he was able to walk about the room. One Sunday morning, William's sister, "who had stayed from church to attend him," did what was most appropriate for such a time: she read the Bible aloud. "What's that you have in your hand?" William asked suddenly. The sister stared. "Why, it's the Bible," she said. "What's the Bible?" William asked further. "I know not what you mean!"

Not until then was it known that William had no recollection of anything of his past life. If he had gone to Heaven, it was obvious that what he saw and heard had emptied his mind of everything else. He had to learn to read and write all over again. Gradually, like a child, he was taught other things, too. Eventually Gilbert, his brother, got him back to his Latin, perhaps with no intention of taking him along the same path they were treading together when William, to all appearances, died the first time. Cornelius Nepos was listening to William recite one afternoon when the poor young man clapped a hand to his head, declaring that something hurt him there and, of more significance, that it seemed to him that here was a book he had read before.

That was the beginning of a full restoration. The past came tumbling down around William Tennent's ears. Forgotten scenes regained their place, friends who had become strangers were recognized for old companions and William Tennent's powers as a linguist returned with new force and variety. It would have been highly entertaining, no doubt, to have interviewed persons in the midlands in those days, for some said there was a devil in it, others declared that this man of surpassing piety had been with the angels and still others declared the circumstance highly overdrawn. Just the same, says the record of the case, "this event, at the time, made a considerable noise, and offered not only matter of serious contemplation to the devout Christian . . . but furnished a subject of deep investigation and learned inquiry to the real philosopher and curious anatomist."

If William Tennent hadn't died, what had happened to

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him? If he had left this wicked world, where had he been? If he had been in Heaven, well, what had he seen? What was it like there and how did people dress? Had William met anyone he had known on earth? Questions of the skeptical and naive flew in thick competition. Dr. Henderson, the elder of Old Tennent, and Mr. Boudinot, always on the trail of the best details of a good story, sought to get to the bottom of it. One or the other went after Mr. Tennent and pressed him for answers and, although he was reluctant "to enter into any explanation of his perceptions and feelings at this time" he "at length consented and proceeded with a solemnity not to be described."

William said that while he was talking to his brother on the state of his soul and "the fears I had entertained for my future welfare," he found himself in "another state of existence, under the direction of a superior Being, who ordered me to follow him. I was accordingly wafted along," he continued, "I know not how, till I beheld at a distance an ineffable glory, the impression of which on my mind it is impossible to communicate to mortal man." Mr. Tennent spoke generally from that point on, describing a scene that might have been lifted from the Book of Revelations. His own fears were gone, he said. He was in the midst of "an innumerable host of happy beings, surrounding the inexpressible glory, in acts of adoration and joyous worship." He "heard things unutterable," songs and hallelujahs. "I felt joy unutterable and full of glory," he declared, and "then applied to my conductor, and requested leave to join the happy throng." But Mr. Tennent was told at once that he "must return to the earth."

Return, he did. What had been three days had passed like "not more than 10 or 20 minutes." But the coming-back was a distinct disappointment at the time. Mr. Tennent declared that "the idea of returning to this world of sorrow and trouble gave me such a shock that I fainted repeatedly." And even though he was a part of the sorrowful world many years after that, the sounds he had heard, "the ravishing sounds of

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songs and hallelujahs," stayed with him for at least three years.

The interviewers of Mr. Tennent kept after him. Either they were skeptical themselves or they wanted to confound the skeptics around them. "It is not surprising," they wrote, "that after so affecting an account, strong solicitude should have been felt for further information as to the words, or at least the subjects of praise and adoration, which Mr. Tennent had heard. But when he was requested to communicate these, he gave a decided negative, adding, 'You will know them, with many other particulars, hereafter; as you will find the whole among my papers.'"

Perhaps the skeptics jeered. It may be that they jeered louder later on when no papers were forthcoming, concluding that Mr. Tennent proved evasive when actual attempts were made to pin him down. We have come upon a few persons, even in the neighborhood of Tennent, of the stripe that insists on proof before belief. But, being of the school that prefers to believe until a thing, contrariwise, is disproven, we have held that Mr. Tennent was an honest man, that there were things so sacred that they would serve no common discussion, and that acutally he had gone to Heaven and had returned. War has ever been an interloper and in this case the Revolution barred those who had expected to serve William Tennent as his executors from his deathbed: While Mr. Boudinot was at Valley Forge, the pastor, his papers and other records were withdrawn behind a curtain—a son who may have had possession of what his father may have written died "among entire strangers" about fifty miles from Charleston.

The trance was not the only unusual circumstance in the life of the Reverend William who, dying in 1777, in his seventy-second year, served the old church as pastor well into the forty-fourth. His kinsman, the Reverend Doctor William M. Tennent, in recalling one unusual Sunday when the pastor was tempted to declare the Bible "not of Divine authority, but the invention of man," has said that something like the spell of that earlier day blotted out everything until, facing

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his congregation, he lifted his arms in supplication with an agonized cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" This was during "the great revival of religion which took place under the ministry of Mr. Whitefield, and others distinguished for their piety and zeal at that period" when Mr. Tennent "was laboriously active, and much engaged to help forward the work,—in the performance of which he met with strong and powerful temptations."

Temptation would seem far removed from the old church or from the sainted Mr. Tennent who ministered there but even in that reflection the pastor himself would surely offer objection, for it was the conclusion of preachers of his time that the devil was lurking in every pleasant place. These were the days of the Wesleys, George Whitefield, the fiery Mr. Rowland and many others who, in what they had to say and the manner they chose for saying it, concluded that part of the revival was to stir up, to disrupt and to leave even reluctant hearers profoundly disturbed. John Wesley, writing of a Watch Night service of the period attended by "Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins and my brother, Charles," says that "the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground." This was at three in the morning, in the days when even the Bishop of London inquired if Mr. Whitefield's methods, as well as his Journals, "were not a little tinctured with enthusiasm."

In the memoirs of Mr. Whitefield, ever ready to move as a flaming star across the horizon, from one country to another, in the interests of Log College, Princeton, or his Orphan House in Georgia, there are many references to the Tennents. Whitefield, passing to and from Philadelphia, where he "preached frequently after night from the gallery of the Court House in Market Street," paused to write in his Journals that "Mr. Tennent, and his brethren in presbytery, intend breeding up gracious youths for our Lord's vineyard." On a journey that took him and his sermons to Elizabethtown, Maidenhead, Abington, Neshaminy, Burlington and New

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Brunswick and thence to Philadelphia where "so loud was his voice, and so distinct was his speech, that every word he said was understood on board of a shallop at Market Street wharf, a distance of upwards of four hundred feet," Whitehead was here referring to the father of the Tennents.

Crowds followed George Whitefield from Philadelphia so that he paused to preach at "Chester, Wilmington, Newcastle, Christianbridge and Whitely Creek, where Mr. William Tennent (whose meeting house is in the neighborhood) had erected a tent for him. Others were not so thoughtful. On a voyage from Savannah, after the cornerstone of the Orphan House had been laid, to Newcastle, the man whose preaching could be heard from Market Street, Philadelphia, to the Jersey shore, found that "at Philadelphia the churches were now denied him." This was in 1740. "He therefore preached in the fields," according to the memoirs of Dr. Gillies, published a little less than a century after, "and large collections were made for the Orphan-house." Many looked on this business of the Orphan House as a racket but not these folk of the Philadelphia area where, at one service, after societies for praying and singing "were set on foot, and in every part . . . many were concerned about their salvation," Mr. Whitefield gained "one hundred and ten pounds sterling." This is the time, and the locality, where Gilbert Tennent enters the picture.

"A church was formed by the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, out of those who were denominated the followers and converts of Mr. Whitefield," says a footnote of Dr. Gillies. "No less than 140 individuals were received at first, after a strict examination, as members of this newly constituted church." Converts were wanted but Mr. Tennent, the man abandoned by his brother for that memorable journey to heaven, wasn't taking everybody in. "The admission of a large number," the note concludes, "was delayed only because their exercises and spiritual state had not yet attained such maturity as to afford satisfaction to themselves, or to the officers of the church."

It was in April of that year that Whitefield's traveling com-

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panion, William Seward, wrote: "Mr. Tennent informed us of the great success which had attended Mr. Whitefield's preaching when here last." There were nights when it "was as it were turned to day, when we rode singing through the woods," when, after "many delightful hours with Messrs. Tennents, Blair, etc.," George Whitefield wrote that he "could not help recommending these men, wherever I went, in the strongest manner . . ." "Mr. Jones, the Baptist minister," wrote Seward, told us of two other ministers, Mr. Treat and Mr. Morgan, who were so affected with Mr. Whitefield's spirit, that the latter had gone forth preaching the glad tidings of salvation towards the sea coast in New Jersey." That, obviously, was a particularly bold venture.

These men had something; they were on fire. An Indian trader, having heard George Whitefield, gave up salesmanship and went back to tell his tribe that unless they turned over a new leaf they would never see the Happy Hunting Ground. A colored boy, given to amusing a fashionable drinking club with imitations, portrayed Mr. Whitefield so effectively, with the preacher's own words, that the club broke up. At Christopher Wigner's plantation, over in Pennsylvania, Peter Bohler preached in Dutch after Mr. Whitefield had finished, in order to make sure that all would catch the full fury of it. Even in the midlands, settlers were aroused. An entry of April 25, 1740, discloses that Mr. Seward aroused George Whitefield at three, long before dawn, and though the preacher "was very weak in body, yet the Lord enabled him to ride nearly fifty miles, and to preach to about five thousand people at Amwell, with the same power as usual. Mr. Gilbert Tennent, Mr. Rowland, Mr. Wales, and Mr. Campbell, four godly ministers, met us here." The next day Whitefield was in New Brunswick where he was met by "Mr. Noble from New York, a zealous promoter of our Lord's kingdom." Mr. Noble said "their society at New York was increased from seventy, to one hundred and seventy," and Mr. Seward attests, "that Messrs. Gilbert and William Tennent, Mr. Rowland, and several others, were hard laborers in our Lord's vineyard."

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Later the same year George Whitefield was in New England, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island. At Boston, preaching a farewell sermon to twenty thousand, he collected nearly five hundred pounds for his work among the orphans and negroes. Later he was at Rye and Kingsbridge, Newark, Baskenridge and at Trenton, where "he had a long conference with some ministers about Mr. Tennent's complying with an invitation to go and preach in New England. After prayer, and considering the arguments both for and against this proposal, they thought it best that he should go; which, however diffident of himself, he was persuaded to do."

Sitting quietly at Tennent today, one cannot help asking what these men had to say, what it was that they had that was different from others in their manner of dispensing it. The very silence of the white sanctuary of the shrine on White Hill provides an eloquence; something that was austere re-echoed here, something that was warming beyond the need of stoves, something that was irksome but could not be denied. It was here that the "remarkable preacher from England" spoke, here that the Tennents and their friends gained new inspiration. It was here that people of the midlands and beyond came to hear, to agree and in many cases to disapprove of the call to religion that mingled with preaching "against mixed dancing and the frolicking of males and females together, which practice was then very common in New England. This offended some," says the record, as if it might have been written yesterday, "especially young people."

Before the year was out George Whitefield had gone beyond the midlands and the land of the Tennents, to be heard in Gloucester, Greenwich, Pilesgrove, Cohansie, Salem, Frog's Manor and Nottingham. In 1741 he was back in England where "the episcopal clergy gave him no countenance" and on to Scotland where "some of the more rigid Presbyterians would not hold communion with him, on account of his connection with the Church of England, and his seeming to assume the office of an evangelist, peculiar, in their apprehension, to the first ages of the church: while some, who

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affected to be thought more sensible, or more modish and polite, were mightily disaffected with him for preaching the Calvinistic doctrines of election, original sin, efficacious grace, justification through faith, and perseverance of the saints, and for inveighing against the play house, dancing assemblies, games of chance, haunting taverns, vanity and extravagance in dress, and levity in behavior and conversation."

If the paneling could give out what it once took in at Tennent, it may be that many of these thunderings would shake the old church. "Some gentlemen and ladies," says a contemporary article, "who went to hear him, would not go a second time, because he disturbed them by insisting on man's miserable and dangerous state by nature." On many, however, "of all ranks and ages, especially young people, deep impressions were made, and many of them waited on him privately, lamenting their former immoral lives, or stupid thoughtlessness about religion." This was no Oxford Group organizer but George Whitefield, the friend of the Tennents, the evangelist and world-traveler who was heard on a knoll near to which a decisive battle for freedom was to be fought, years later. These were the young bloods of nearly two hundred years ago.

Whitefield watched the activities of the Tennents with interest no matter where he was. In 1744 he wrote that friends had informed him of "Mr. Tennent's going out as an itinerant," with "the awakening increased in various places." At about the same time he wrote that, having returned to America, he was on his way to Philadelphia when he "had the pleasure of preaching, by an interpreter, to some converted Indians, and of seeing nearly fifty young ones in one school, near Freehold, learning the Assembly's catechism. A blessed awakening had been begun and carried on," declared the preacher, "by the instrumentality of David Brainerd, such as has not been heard of since the awakening of New England by the venerable Mr. Eliot, who used to be styled the apostle of the Indians; his brother followed him. Mr. William Tennent, whose party I found much upon the advance, seemed to encourage his endeavors with all his heart."

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The writer of the Whitefield memoirs sees significance here in the fact that while Whitefield, the Wesleys and others had made their appearance in England, in the time of revival, "to stem the torrent of infidelity, and propagate divine truth," the Lord manifested the same care and concern for the inhabitants of the new world, in raising up that burning and shining light, Dr. Jonathan Edwards, to disseminate the seed of eternal life in that barren soil." "His brother, Mr. Gilbert Tennent," the evangelist goes on, "being early solicited thereto, I found settled in the place formerly erected at the beginning of the awakening. The gentleman offered me eight hundred pounds a year, only to preach among them six months, and to travel the other six months where I would." The flattering offer was not accepted.

In 1748, in the midst of attacks on his character, at home and abroad, with many in the midlands of New Jersey joining those who asked questions concerning this everlasting campaign that seemed to bring in the money, Whitefield was remembering New Jersey in Scotland, endeavoring "to do all the service he could for the New Jersey College, and in conjunction with some ministers who wished well to the institution, advised the sending over a minister from America, to make application in person: which was afterwards done in the year 1754, when application was made by Mr. Tennent and Mr. Davies to the assembly, who appointed a general collection." Writing of the actual quest later on, George Whitefield records that the two ministers arrived in England the day after Christmas, 1753, "to raise contributions for the college of New Jersey." The preacher gave them recommendatory letters "and heartily endeavored to further their design." So often these efforts in behalf of what now is Princeton University are forgotten, lost sight of in memories of Mr. Tennent, at any rate. Eight years later, even though a sick man, Whitefield was preaching at the college for which he sought funds.

What kind of a minister was Whitefield, anyway? Was he like the Tennents, in appearance or beliefs? Or did the cause of the Kingdom of Heaven carry them all away together, far

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above and beyond all that? Whitefield, speaking of himself, objecting to the dismissal of a petition by the Archbishop of Canterbury, said he was "a true catholic, moderate presbyter of the Church of England." The father of William and Gilbert Tennent had been the same. But was the eloquence of William Tennent, the younger, akin to that of George Whitefield, whose preaching was such as could unlock a purse fastened deliberately against him? Only the walls of Old Tennent could answer.

It may be that Whitefield's visits to the church on White Hill were not of a frequency or duration sufficient to prove that eloquence. But proof surely is offered in the testimony of none other than Benjamin Franklin, who attended services both in Philadelphia and New Jersey, where Whitefield was preaching. Speaking of the Orphan House project, Dr. Franklin wrote, "I did not disapprove the design; but as Georgia was then destitute of materials and workmen, and it was proposed to send them from Philadelphia, at a great expense, I thought it would have been better to build the house at Philadelphia. This I advised but he rejected my council, and I therefore refused to contribute. I happened, soon after, to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket, a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded, I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper; another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably, that I emptied my pocket into the collector's dish, gold and all."

It might be concluded that the Tennents did not go in for oratory like Whitefield's for if they had, there would have been little point in that splendid offer for a six-month mission. Gilbert Tennent, one could reasonably conclude, was not a supporter of vitriolic proclamations of the terrors of divine law, for at least on that one occasion, which you may recall, he rebuked Mr. Rowland whose preaching had caused many to faint. Gilbert's classic interruption from the foot of the



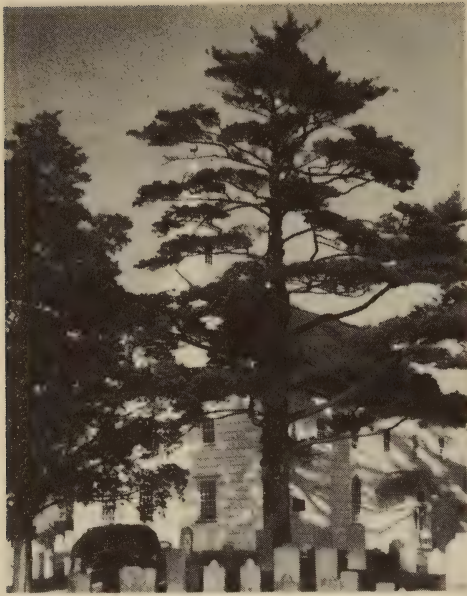
Tall, sturdy and reaching back to a time beyond the lives of all who look upon them now, these hollies cover one section of Sandy Hook.



Referred to in almost every weather forecast and known to every ship, Sandy Hook's woodlands and barren wastes have many stories to tell.



One of the Hook's oldest holly trees. Alden Cottrell, assistant State forester, measured it and took a boring to estimate its age at more than 250 years.



Through the trees, the original shingles of Old Tennent gleam in contrast to the shadows. A memorial to early evangelists, sturdy Scots seeking religious liberty.

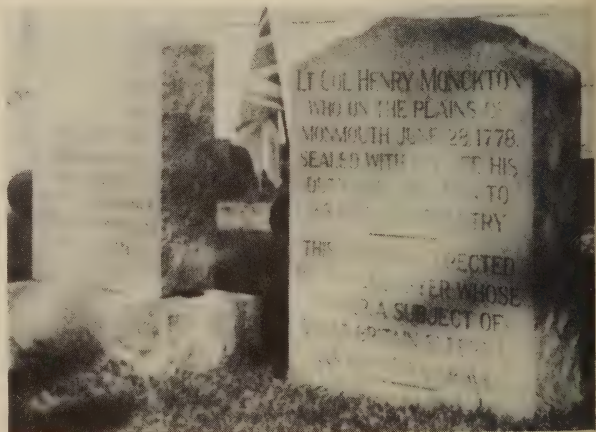
In this view of Old Tennent Church the tower that never owned a bell leans just a little as if tired of its vigil of three centuries.



Ghostly sentinels are all about and one oak survives to show why the turn of the road was once White Hill, or White Oak Hill.



Here, in the shadow of Tennent Church, a man who sat upon a tombstone watching the battle was killed by a bouncing cannon ball. They carried him in the church to die. Lt. Col. Monckton's grave is beside that of Captain Fauntleroy.



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pulpit is worth repeating. "Brother Rowland," he called up to the preacher, "is there no balm in Gilead?" Whereupon Mr. Rowland "changed immediately the terror of his address."

There is an anecdote with just as much color which concerns William Tennent, William as he was in George Whitefield's day. Then it was, in September of 1754, after a visit to Governor Belcher in Elizabethtown, that Whitefield was host to Mr. Tennent "at a gentleman's house." The account, a footnote in small, hardly readable type in the memoirs of Dr. Gillies, should be quoted verbatim, and should serve, beyond that, to be read quietly at Old Tennent, some quiet Summer's afternoon.

"After dinner," says the account, "Mr. Whitefield adverted to the difficulties attending the gospel ministry; lamented that all their zeal availed but little; said that he was weary with the burdens of the day; declared his great consolation was, that in a short time his work would be done, when he should depart and be with Christ; he then appealed to the ministers, if it was not their great comfort that they should soon go to rest. They generally assented, except Mr. Tennent who sat next to Whitefield in silence; and by his countenance discovered but little pleasure in the conversation . . ."

This would seem a little odd. Since his trip to Heaven Mr. Tennent had said repeatedly that what he had seen and heard was so wonderful that little life on earth had to offer could hold a candle to it. And yet, here he was, not smiling considerately, not at all willing to humor the great man whose dictum, for many, was final. Why, Mr. Tennent had made a face!

"Whitefield, tapping him on the knee, said, 'Well, brother Tennent . . . do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand, when you will be called home?' Mr. T. bluntly answered, 'No, sir, it is no pleasure to me at all; and if you knew your duty, it would be none to you. I have nothing to do with death; my business is to live as long as I can, as well as I can, and to serve my master as well as I can, until he shall think proper to call me home.'"

There was no doubt about that, was there? Alden Cottrell

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had pointed out the passage and we began to wonder, inasmuch as George Whitefield had addressed Mr. Tennent as "the oldest man amongst us," if this was not the father of the Tennents, not William, the younger, at all. However, it was pointed out that when Whitefield died in 1770 he was but fifty-six. No matter how contradictory his views at the moment might seem, this was the man who for so many years was the shepherd of White Oak Hill. Whitefield persisted and "urged for an explicit answer to his question, in case the time of death were left to his own choice. Mr. T. replied, 'I have no choice about it: I am God's servant, and have engaged to do his business as long as he pleased to continue me therein. . . .'"

Now Mr. Tennent had had enough. He talked back at last. "But now, brother," he said, "let me ask you a question. What do you think I would say, if I was to send my man Tom into the field to plough; and if at noon I should go to the field, and find him lounging under a tree and complaining, 'Master, the sun is very hot, and the ploughing very hard, I am weary of the work you have appointed me, and am overdone with the heat and burden of the day: do master, let me return home, and be discharged from this hard service?' What would I say? Why, that he was a lazy fellow; that it was his business to do the work I had appointed him, until I should think fit to call him home."

Read these words through in the old white church and you can almost feel the silence that followed this declaration. "The pleasant manner in which the reproof was administered," the note concludes, "rather increased the social harmony of the company; who became satisfied that it was very possible to err, even in desiring with undue earnestness 'to depart and be with Christ, which is far better,' than to remain in this imperfect state; and that it is the duty of the Christian in this respect to say, 'all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.'"

If Mr. Tennent ever doubted that he had come back to worldly things, surely it was not during what Edwin Salter

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recalls as his "remarkable trial for perjury," when the preacher was arraigned at Trenton before Chief Justice Robert Hunter Morris in 1742. "The indictment upon which Mr. Tennent was tried was one of a series all growing out of the same transaction—the alleged stealing of a horse by the Rev. Mr. Rowland; and the individual who was the cause of all the woes and perils which befel the unfortunate gentlemen who were supposed to be implicated, was a notorious scoundrel named Tom Bell, whose exploits would not suffer by comparison with those of Jonathan Wild or Jack Sheppard."

Tom Bell knew the old church well and the midlands where you'll find it, even better. "An adept in all the arts of fraud, theft, robbery and forgery . . . his chief amusement consisted in traveling from one part of the country to another impersonating different individuals and assuming a variety of characters." By turns Tom was "a sailor, a merchant, a lawyer, a doctor, a preacher, and sustained each character," Mr. Salter declares, "in such a way as to impose on the public." Continue your reflections in Old Tennent for a moment more to think of Tom Bell and his discovery that he bore a startling resemblance to Mr. Rowland, the preacher rebuked by Gilbert Tennent for making so many people faint with his one-man show of the bottomless pits that awaited the unrepentant. That discovery started it all.

Tom turned up in a Princeton tavern one night, dressed in a dark gray coat. John Stockton, father of Richard, the signer, was there, and walking up to Mr. Bell, addressed him as Pastor Rowland. Tom said there was some mistake, that he wasn't the preacher, and Mr. Stockton admitted his mistake, pointing out, however, that it was a natural one to make. That gave the playboy ideas. Going over to Hunterdon County a few days later, choosing an area where Mr. Rowland had sermonized but wasn't too well known, he thought he'd try the new role. He had been everything else, with considerable success—why not pose as a preacher. "You remember me," he said, without further ado. "I'm Mr. Rowland!" The ruse worked. The bogus Mr. Rowland was made more than welcome. He was

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entertained as a house-guest and then, as was natural, was asked to preach the following Sunday. Well, that was going a little far, but Tom Bell was ready for anything. He consented and word went out that the famous Mr. Rowland would occupy the pulpit.

On the way to the church, Tom was riding in a wagon with the ladies, with the master of the house riding as an escort "on a very fine horse," when he clapped a hand to his breast pocket and disclosed that he had left his sermon notes behind. "You go on," he said. "Start the service. Loan me the horse and I'll be back in a jiffy." Tom knew very well what he was doing. He rode back to the house of his host, rifled a desk and other hide-aways that interested him, and disappeared. Undoubtedly he rode away chuckling, knowing that he had not only left the friends waiting at the church but had also put "Hell Fire Rowland" in a tight spot.

It turned out that Mr. Rowland was not in New Jersey during the escapade. He was on a preaching tour in Pennsylvania and Maryland with William Tennent and two Hunterdon County laymen, Joshua Anderson and Benjamin Stevens. As soon as they came back, Mr. Rowland was accused as a horse-thief. One can imagine the excitement. Even at Old Tennent there must have been a great buzzing on the part of members of the congregation. Although the great revival of religious thought found a center of zeal and fervor there, there were hostile acres all about, groups who denounced the Tennents and their associates as fanatics, hypocrites and impostors. Justice Morris, "who, whatever claim he might have to respect, was certainly not distinguished either for religion or morality," he rejoiced to have such a man as Mr. Rowland in his clutches. When the Grand Jury first refused to find a bill against the preacher, Justice Morris sent its members out again. When it returned with a "no bill" a second time, the Court threatened punishment if it missed its final chance. Naturally, Brother Rowland was indicted for trial.

The prosecution claimed a clear case, with a troop of witnesses who testified that none other than Mr. Rowland had

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agreed to preach, had accepted hospitality, had left a party of ladies on the way to church and on the pretext of returning for sermon notes, had ridden off on his host's fine horse. The defense offered Mr. Tennent, his laymen and those who had heard them preach together in Maryland and Pennsylvania, an alibi for the very day when the valuable horseflesh was said to have disappeared in clerical custody. The jury listened to both sides and then acquitted Mr. Rowland.

Under ordinary circumstances, the matter would have ended there. But these were no ordinary circumstances. If the devil's minions, led by Justice Morris, had gibbered in glee to have Mr. Rowland in the dock, now their attention turned to a new target, Mr. Tennent, and so the persecution wouldn't be too obvious, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Stevens were arraigned with him in Hunterdon Quarter Sessions, for perjury. The man who was still firm in his belief that Brother Rowland had played a trick on him, at the expense of a horse that was still missing, was supported by many who claimed they saw Mr. Rowland in possession of the steed, here, there and far away. Indictments were found and moved to the Supreme Court. Anderson demanded immediate trial, got it, and was convicted despite his wrathful protests—he was condemned to stand for an hour on the Court House steps with a paper affixed to his coat, bearing the inscription, "This is for wilful and corrupt perjury."

The trials of William Tennent and Mr. Stevens were delayed. Mr. Tennent proved a difficult defendant, declaring that he knew of no witnesses who would aid him except God and preparing a sermon he said he would preach from the pillory inasmuch as the cards of conviction were stacked against him. He had his own lawyer, John Coxe, who was joined in Trenton by a distinguished member of the New York bar, William Smith, who had turned up at the trial voluntarily. Gilbert Tennent, who had a church in Philadelphia at the time, brought John Kinsey, another attorney, to help. But the array of legal lights protested they could do nothing without evidence, could achieve nothing at all for

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Mr. Tennent, who kept saying that his only reliance was in God and his conscience. "His counsel assured him," Mr. Salter recorded quaintly, "that however well founded this confidence might be, and however important before a heavenly tribunal, it would not avail him in an earthly court."

Another postponement was urged upon the pastor of White Hill but he would have none of it. The lawyers then seized upon a flaw in the indictment, just as they might do today, and Mr. Anderson, acceding to counsel, used it and was cleared. "No," said Mr. Tennent, "I won't do it. It's a snare of the devil. I'll die before I resort to it."

Then something happened, something almost as remarkable as Mr. Tennent's trance, something as surely a part of the dream world through which he had traveled many years before. A man and woman accosted him on his way to court, declaring they had opened their home to Brother Rowland, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Stevens and William Tennent, when they were on their preaching tour. Each had dreamed, they swore, that Mr. Tennent was in great trouble and that they should hurry to Trenton at once and ask him what they could do to help him. Mr. Tennent listened, seemed to be impressed and then confessed himself more bewildered than ever. However, he suffered a lapse of determination long enough to urge them to consult the lawyers who knew at once that here were the witnesses who would wreck the charges, dream or no dream. Then finally, to bring the anticlimax, John Stockton appeared, testified for William Tennent, and recalled the night at the inn in Princeton when he had mistaken the rascal, Tom Bell, for Mr. Rowland. The jury declared for acquittal, once and for all.

Thus today, at Old Tennent, there is more than an important church, more than an historic shrine surrounded by the graves of Scotch pioneers, patriots, soldiers of the king, more than a masterpiece of architecture that has survived at least one fire and the changes and chances of this mortal life. Here is the stuff that is immortal, stuff to be brooded on for its true meaning. Here are memories of Old Scots, fiery declara-

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tions of faith ingrained in box pews and panels, recollections of men who were called great throughout the land, and beyond them all a peace that fills the air and says, "Be still, and know that I am God." Here, where Mr. Tennent went to heaven a second time, there is romance. . . .

Romance? Romance and Mr. Tennent? Well, when William was thirty-three and a bachelor, a friend visited him from New York. "William," he said, "you ought to be married. And, if you're interested, I know just the woman. She's a widow, a Mrs. Noble, and if I'm any judge, everything you need. How about coming to New York with me tomorrow? Maybe I can fix things up." Mr. Tennent went to New York, met the lady next day, found that she fitted his friend's description. Left alone with her as artfully as was possible, William found his tongue and spoke bluntly. "Maybe your brother told you what I'm here for," he began. "I'm a man of few words and I haven't time to waste." Then he proposed, suggested that he go back home and preach on Sunday as usual and return Monday. "Then we can be married and I can take you home with me," he concluded. "Think it over."

"The lady," says one account, "with some hesitation and difficulty at last consented, being convinced that his situation and circumstances rendered it proper. Thus in one week she found herself mistress of his house. She proved a most valuable treasure to him, more than answering every thing said of her by an affectionate brother."

Chapter 21

THE STRANGE CASE OF GENERAL LEE: ENGLISHTOWN

"... A sick man wakes at his own mouth's wail;
A gossip coughs in her thrice-told tale;
A muttering gamester shakes the dice;
A reaper foretells good luck from the skies;
A monarch vows as he lifts his hand to them;
A patriot leaving his native land to them,
Cries to the world against perjured state . . ."

—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING: 1809-1861

NO MATTER where one chooses to travel through the midlands of New Jersey, the name of General Charles Lee is inescapable. Whether it be at Hopewell, where shocked descendants still repeat the stories of their ancestors in vivid detail, or at Widow White's Tavern, Baskingridge, now Basking Ridge, or even on the field at Monmouth itself, even a casual interest must be struck by the maze of contradictions bound together in one man. From first to last, his conduct was unpredictable.

At Hopewell, once Columbia and Hopewell Meeting, descendants of pioneer stock talk of the General who went to bed with his dogs when quartered in the village. There it was, at the Hunt House, the farmstead of the Stouts, that Charles Lee, "who preferred to let the British force parade unmolested across the State," looked "anxious and indignant that his military experience and judgment" had not swung his associates, Washington, Greene, Stirling, Lafayette, Steuben, Knox, Poor, Wayne, Woodford, Patterson, Scott and Duportail.

That anxious look is well graven in one of the bas-reliefs of the Battle of Monmouth monument at Freehold which depicts the outstanding leaders of the Revolution around the council table at Hopewell. General Washington is listening attentively while Lafayette urges immediate action, with

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Stueben and Duportail obviously in agreement. Patterson and Green would force an engagement, too. Colonel Scammel, Adjutant-General, who was to die at Yorktown, is shown busily engaged recording the opinions of the experts and hoping General Wayne, who wants to say something equally as forceful, will wait until Lafayette has finished. Only Lee is sitting back, scoffing, grumbling under his breath and making a face.

The council was held June 24, 1778. Valuing Wayne's opinion, the Commander went first to Kingston, next to Cranbury and then to Englishtown—and there, perhaps, was where we began to wonder, in earnest, about Charles Lee. For there it was, at The Village Inn, restored and kept much as it was in colonial times by the present proprietor, James T. Applegate, that General Lee's arrest was ordered for court-martial.

Englishtown, when Gordon wrote about it in 1834, was a post-town of Freehold Township, with a gristmill, two taverns, two stores and about thirty dwellings. Mr. Finley's map of the same year shows it at an important road junction, with early highways leading to New Brunswick, Freehold and Hightstown. Historians ten years later gave the village ten more houses. Equaling the quiet charm of the town, The Village Inn today guards its heirlooms of history well, with its rooms chock-full of period furniture. Mr. Applegate and his wife, at the end of a long line of minehosts, James Smock, Richard Fleming, Craig Fleming and others, know the importance of the past.

Once the inn entertained overnight guests but some proved untrustworthy and treasures began to disappear. Now the upstairs rooms admit only reverent visitors and many who remark sagging floors of original boards, the old clock ticking away in a corner and settings that grace lovely mantels over hearths that are idle now, and who dine in grand style unaware that the beamed room is where Washington decided that he had had about enough of General Lee. The tavern itself goes back to 1732.

Charles Lee was a year older than The Village Inn where

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the order for his arrest was signed. He was a Welshman, the son of General John Lee, of the British army. Commissioned in the forces of George II while a youngster, when he was eleven, according to some writers, there is no doubt but that he showed precocious military talent from the beginning. Already a linguist of reputation, he first came to America in 1756, making a name for himself in the wars of the French and the Indians.

He set himself up for an interval with the Mohawks, learning their language and leaving them, finally, as a chief of their tribe, with the distinctly appropriate name of "Boiling Water." He served under Burgoyne in Portugal in 1762, having attained a colonel's commission. B. J. Lossing, in his *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*, says that "After engaging for a while in political strife in England" he went back to the Continent, "and during three years, from 1770, he rambled all over Europe." The great men of his time received him everywhere, and after a fling at this or that military cause he became an aide to Poniatowski, King of Poland.

After two years in Poland, he went to Turkey with Poniatowski's ambassador. Constantinople gave him up for Paris and Paris yielded him to America again in 1773. General Lee certainly got around.

For a time he was a landowner in Berkley County, Virginia, due to the persuasions of General Gates, with whom he had struck up a friendship and to whom he was said to have been writing a letter when surprised at Basking Ridge. The friendship seems strangely appropriate in many ways, for Horatio Gates, to whom Washington had sent many earnest requests for reinforcements in the affair at Fort Mifflin, paid no heed until "longer non-compliance would have been positive disobedience." At the time, it was said, Gates had ample stores and troops to spare, the army of his old associate, Burgoyne, having been captured, "and had he acted with the energy of true patriotism, he might have re-enforced Washington, by which the Delaware forts could have been saved, and the enemy driven out of Philadelphia. But he was vainly

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expecting soon to supercede Washington in the chief command," Lossing continues, "and he treated his orders with indifference."

There seems to have been a broad stripe of jealousy in both Lee and Gates and this, as well as other parallels, seem to have haunted them to the end of their lives.

Lee resigned his commission in the British army, accepting one from Congress in 1775 when the Continental army was organized. Accompanying Washington to Cambridge, he was in every engagement of importance, especially in the South, from then until his capture in December, 1776. Unquestionably his extraordinary talents made him famous, too, for Washington, his staff and patriots generally had grown to expect great things wherever Lee was assigned. Thus the news of his capture at Widow White's, Basking Ridge, as well as the circumstances that surrounded it, came as a jolt and the feeling was that the General had played the fool.

You must remember that Charles Lee ranked next to Washington himself. The General no doubt felt his position for although "he had been frequently directed to join the commander-in-chief," says Thomas Gordon, "he tardily obeyed, manifesting a strong disposition to retain his separate command, and rather to hang on, and threaten the rear of the British army, than to strengthen that in their front. With this view, in opposition to the judgment of Washington, he proposed to establish himself at Morristown." Perhaps, it is suggested, there were times when the General was but passively interested in the cause or else actively interested in the charms of the neighborhood. It may have been that he took his military science so seriously that the cause didn't matter half as much as well-executed tactics and so, at the moment, he considered himself much too important a piece to be given only a secondary move in Washington's game of chess. "Again urged to march, he proceeded reluctantly," says the author of the *Gazetteer*, "still declaring his opinion in favour of his own proposition."

Then comes the thunderbolt:

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"Whilst passing through Morris county, near Baskingridge, at the distance of about twenty miles from the British encampment, he, very indiscreetly, quartered, under a slight guard, in a house about three miles from his troops. Information of this circumstance was given, by a countryman, to Colonel Harcourt, then, with a body of cavalry, watching his movements, who, immediately, formed and executed the design of seizing him. Early in the morning of the twelfth of December, by a rapid march, his corps reached Lee's quarters. The general, receiving no intimation of his approach, until the house was surrounded, became a prisoner, and was borne off in triumph to the British army; where, for some time, he was treated, not as a prisoner of war, but as a deserter from the British service."

Although Mr. Gordon is obviously kind in passing over the circumstances of the capture at Widow White's, some idea as to the effect which the news had on Washington and people in general is brought out when he adds:

"This misfortune made a painful impression throughout America. The confidence, originally placed in General Lee, alike due to his experience and talents, had been increased by his success, whilst commanding the southern department, and by the conviction, that his advice, to which was ascribed the operations in New York, which defeated the plans of General Howe, would, if more closely followed, have prevented the losses at Fort Washington and Fort Lee. No officer, save the commander-in-chief, had so large a share of the confidence of the army and country, and his capture was universally bewailed, as the greatest calamity which had befallen the American arms."

Even so, to many the incident must have seemed unimportant in itself. Only in the light of Lee's rating, what Washington in all patience expected of him in the end, and events that followed could the full significance be understood. Here was a military genius, with much of the future of the country that had commissioned him, as well as his own, at stake, passing all of it up for what was probably a gay night at the inn.

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To Gordon's version of what happened at Basking Ridge, the compilers of *Historical Collections* added interesting details. Quoting from the Memoirs of General James Wilkinson, who was with Lee at the time, General Lee was in a bad humor the morning he was taken, which might seem odd unless one considers that he might have had—well, a headache. He “wasted the morning in altercation with certain militia corps who were of his command, particularly the Connecticut Light-horse, several of who appeared in large full-bottomed perukes, and were treated very irreverently.” A peruke, for your information, is a wig, so apparently the boys were putting on an act. “One wanted forage, another his horse shod, another his pay, and a fourth his provisions,” says a footnote.

Perhaps they were serious, maybe they were clowning on that morning after. Lee took them to be in earnest and replied: “Your wants are numerous; but you have not mentioned the last—you want to go home, and shall be indulged, for you do no good here.”

General Wilkinson wrote that Lee was occupied for a time by the adjutant-general who came for orders. “We did not sit down to breakfast before 10 o'clock,” he disclosed. “General Lee was engaged in answering General Gates' letter, and I had risen from the table, and was looking out of an end window, down a lane about one hundred yards in length, which led to the house from the main road, when I discovered a party of British troops turn the corner of the avenue at full charge. Startled at this unexpected spectacle, I exclaimed, ‘Here, sir, are the British cavalry!’ ‘Where?’ replied the general, who had signed the letter in the instant. ‘Around the house;’ for they had opened file and encompassed the building. General Lee appeared alarmed, yet collected, and his second observation marked his self-possession: ‘Where is the guard? Damn the guard, why don't they fire?’ and, after a momentary pause, he turned to me and said, ‘Do, sir, see what has become of the guard!’”

It is interesting to note from General Wilkinson's recollections that intervention at this point came from a feminine

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quarter, not only in the light of what may have taken General Lee to the inn in the first place but especially in view of what even the circumspect Elias Boudinot had to say later on. "The women of the house at this moment entered the room," Wilkinson wrote, "and proposed to him to conceal himself in a bed, which he rejected with evident disgust." Seizing the pistols on the table and taking charge of the letter General Lee had written to General Gates, Wilkinson hurried to a room at the other end of the house, where, he said, he had seen the guard that morning and where, he disclosed, he found stacked guns but no soldiers. "I stepped out of the door, and perceived the dragoons chasing them in different directions, and receiving a very uncivil salutation, I returned into the house," says the Memoirs.

What that "uncivil salutation" was, you and many of us would give a lot to know! It would have been very decent of him, too—or perhaps not, at that!—if General Wilkinson had made some disclosure here as to what was in the letter Lee had written to Gates, which he had so thoughtfully stuffed in his pocket. However—

There was "a respectable elderly lady" living in Basking Ridge in 1842 who was there when General Lee was taken and who, interviewed at the time, said that two members of the guard, having retreated a short distance from the tavern, refused to surrender and were killed. The Britishers were using sabres that day, because the sound of shooting would have aroused American troops in the vicinity, and so, when it came to burying at least these two victims, removal to a cemetery was impossible and interment was decided on where they fell in bloody combat.

Gordon wrote that it was a "countryman" who gave Colonel Harcourt the tip on the prize within his grasp. Messrs. Barber and Howe, while quoting General Wilkinson's imputing of the responsibility to "a domestic traitor" who passed Lee's quarters earlier that December morning on private business, accidentally falling in with Colonel Harcourt's reconnoitering party, assert that Colonel J. W. Drake, of Mendham,

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whom they interviewed, declared that the information came from a Mr. Mucklewraith, or Macklewraith, an elder in the Presbyterian church at Mendham. "While walking in the road" Mr. Macklewraith "was surrounded by a party of British cavalry, who pressed him into their service," according to Colonel Drake.

James Wilkinson believed that the dragoons had come upon his superior by accident and, considering that "from the terrific tales spread over the country, of the violence and barbarity of the enemy," the attackers were members of "a wanton murdering party," he "determined not to die without company." "I accordingly sought a position where I could not be approached by more than one person at a time," he goes on, "and with a pistol in each hand, I awaited the expected search, resolved to shoot the first and the second person who might appear, and then to appeal to my sword. I did not remain long in this unpleasant situation, but was apprized of the object of the incursion by the very audible declaration, 'If the General does not surrender in five minutes, I will set fire to the house!' which, after a short pause, was repeated with a solemn oath."

It may have been that even General Wilkinson underrated Lee's importance, for until that moment, you see, he appears to have had no notion that the chief object of the swoop was the General.

"Within two minutes," he hurries on, "I heard it proclaimed, 'Here is the General, he has surrendered.' A general shout ensued, a trumpet sounded the assembly, and the unfortunate Lee, mounted on my horse, which stood ready at the door, was hurried off in triumph, bareheaded, in his slippers and blanket-coat, his collar open, and his shirt very much soiled from several days' use."

Much that should be Charles Lee's story seems to be veering toward an account of General Wilkinson but, be that as it may, the reflections of the aide-de-camp are more than interesting at this point. For, when he thought about the matter thoroughly, Wilkinson wasn't so sure the cause wasn't better

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off without General Lee. Admitting that the capture of Lee "was felt to be a public calamity" that "cast gloom over the country and excited general sorrow" and that "this sympathy was honorable to the people, and due to the stranger who had embarked his fortune with theirs," General Wilkinson proceeds to administer the well-known kick in the neck. "Although this misfortune deprived the country of its most experienced chief," he says, "I have never considered the deprivation a public blessing, ministered by the hand of Providence." Linking together a chain of "ifs," including General Lee's abandon of caution for convenience, the tip-off to Colonel Harcourt, his own visit to the General which implies he was not an aide at all, delay in obeying Washington's command and the perfect timing in the arrival of the captors, Wilkinson reiterates that something more potent than the hand of man was in it.

Wilkinson, who watched his chance, stole to the stable where he grabbed the first horse he could find and escaped to reach General Sullivan, "under march toward Pluckemin," may have been the first to reveal what had happened. If his later writings serve as any index, he spared none of the details in the account of the military genius from overseas who had been taken away unceremoniously, clad in bedroom slippers and a dressing gown.

Mr. Boudinot, president of the Continental Congress, Commissary General of Prisoners in the Army of America during the Revolutionary War and Director of the Mint, kept a Journal or *Historical Recollections of American Events* during the war. Into this interesting document of which Frederick Bourquin printed an edition of three hundred and fifteen copies in 1894, the Philadelphian who was born May 2, 1740, and died in Burlington, October 24, 1821, told of many events from a point of view unexcelled anywhere else. Among his revelations having to do with Silas Deane, first secret minister to the Court of France, "John the Painter" who destroyed the British naval stores at Portsmouth, the Frenchman who poisoned American prisoners in New York and was rewarded



The Village Inn at Englishtown, where Washington read the last of Charles Lee's vituperative letters and ordered his arrest, goes back to 1732.



Here is Major General Charles Lee, not so much in caricature as it was meant to be, but a likeness declared "successful" by those who knew him.



Mr. Applegate restored the interior of the inn at Englishtown where Washington ordered Lee's court-martial.



There are many Nortons near Eiler's Corner for the old cemetery on the hill was once the Norton burial-ground. Now there's a spooky tower on guard among the tombs, in memory of some.



John was undoubtedly honest, affectionate and good but the design of his tombstone, at Cranberry, would indicate that he was a blacksmith, withal, in the days of white-smiths, too.

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by General Howe and other equally fascinating matters, he minces few words in his "History of the Exchange of General Charles Lee . . . Describing his Indelicate Behavior in General Washington's House, and Narrating his Infamous Tirade Against Washington, and his Ridiculous Proposition to Congress."

For that matter, up in the Basking Ridge country today you won't find many who are as kind as the more formal historians and say that General Lee went to the tavern of Widow White to write letters. "A tryst with an attractive widow in a Basking Ridge tavern is blamed for the downfall of Continental Army General Charles Lee," read one account in a contemporary weekly newspaper not long ago. "Tempted by his love for the charming Widow White," the story continues, "he went to her tavern, two miles away. Taking only a small group of horsemen as an escort, the general slipped out of camp and spurred through the night to the tavern, half a mile up the road from the village. The adventure was to be kept secret from Washington.

"Mrs. White met the general and his men at the door with a curtsy. 'I have saved the room in the southeast corner for you, my general,' she said.

"Lee refreshed himself with a bath while his men sought out the barmaids, rumored more than passing fair. The tavern was filled with drinking people when Lee returned in search of Widow White. In the revelry, the departure of a certain Mr. Muklewraith, an elder in the Mendham Presbyterian Church, was unobserved," the account continues. "The gay night sped quickly by.

"As Lee shaved in the cold morning of December 13, a detachment of British cavalry, guided by Muklewraith, surrounded the house and demanded his surrender. Widow White suggested that Lee hide under the bed, but he scorned that idea. Bareheaded, in his slippers and blanket coat, he was hurried off and surrendered to the British commander. . . ."

This version deserves repetition because it shows what details have been added to what General Wilkinson had to say,

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as an eyewitness, and what historians were able to elicit later from those who remained in the neighborhood of the village, willing to discourse on the matter. Some of us, in spite of what might be filled in so easily, would prefer to be fair. Perhaps the Widow White was comely and the object of General Lee's attentions. Very probably there were other women at the inn who were responsible for general laxity, and even buffoonery, on the part of the companions of the General next morning. On the other hand, does Charles Lee's immediate demand for bathing facilities, his shaving next morning and his inferred attention to his person fit with the facts? Is it probable that Lee cared whether the "escapade" was kept a secret or not? Is it likely that a Presbyterian elder was loitering about the bar at such a time? Conclude what you will.

Our thought is that the urgency of a tub and necessity of shaving doesn't rhyme with the General's conduct of the morning after the night before, the blanket coat and slippers in which Lee was known to like lounging about or the dirty shirt to which Wilkinson alludes. To be sure, even a general on campaign has difficulty with his laundry, but women at the inn would have taken in a little washing if Lee had asked them to. Lossing quotes a Mrs. Mercy Warren to describe the General who, after he had dined with Mrs. Warren and her husband at Watertown, wrote Samuel Adams that he was "plain in his person to a degree of ugliness; careless even to unpoliteness; his garb ordinary; his voice rough; his manners rather morose; yet sensible, learned, judicious, and penetrating." "Such is the character of Lee which I received from the lips of Mrs. Hamilton, who expressively called him 'a crabbed man,' " reiterates the author, in a footnote.

He was worse, according to Boudinot, recording in an account that begins mildly enough, that "Genl Lee being taken prisoner at his Quarters at Baskinridge in the County of Somerset (New Jersey) about 4 miles to the left of his Troops towards the Enemy, by his own extreme negligence & folly, was removed. (after the British Cantonments were beaten up at Trenton & Princeton) to New York & confined to a hand-

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some House. under the care of 4 or 5 field Officers, who lived with him & kept a genteel table."

Mr. Boudinot's punctuation may have been odd but he knew what to say and how to say it. Lee, "in this situation," he goes on, sent word to Congress, asking appointment of a committee that would come to interview him "as he had something of consequence to communicate to them." Lee sent signed guarantees of safe conduct from General Howe along with his letter. "This congress very justly refused & treated the application with deserved contempt," says the Journal.

However, when Washington sent Mr. Boudinot to New York, with the consent of General Howe "to examine into the actual Situation of our Prisoners," the commissary general had orders "to pay particular attention to Genl Lee, and accomplish his exchange if possible." It is probable that Lee, having failed in his attempt to gain action on the part of Congress, wrote the commander in chief a letter, but if he did it must have been far different from those written to his superior at a later date.

Boudinot has recorded that on the morning after his arrival in New York, he went to see General Lee "who received me with a great deal of pleasure indeed, and asked me to breakfast with him next day. This I did," he continues, "in company with the Officers who had the care of him, and was treated with Great politeness & Affability. When Breakfast was over, Genl Lee asked me up to his Room. He soon began to complain very heavily of the treatment he had recd from Congress, in not complying with his request. I told him that I thought they had done perfectly right; not to truest any of their members within the British lines; on such an Errand. He replied that he had obtained a safe passport for them from Genl Howe, and they might have come with the utmost safety. I then asked him what end could have been answered by their coming. Sir said he, I had discovered the whole plan of the Summer's Campaign on the part of the British, and would have disclosed the whole to the Committee, by which Congress might have obviated all their Measures, for Mr Boudinot

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it is in vain for Congress to expect to withstand British Troops in the Field."

Elias Boudinot, it is revealed, was properly shocked, not so much by General Lee's asserted opinion, but by the revelations he made under such circumstances. Mr. Boudinot, first, last and always, was an honorable man. Apart from the curious business that war was, in those days, with soldiers returning home at intervals to plow their fields and missions such as the commissary general himself was conducting within enemy lines, his integrity was such that even the enemy must be treated fairly and with no advantages being taken.

"I answered," he recalls, "that he must now be convinced that without his Information they had been withstood and that the Campaign had passed over, and the Enemy had gained no great advantage with all their force and strength. But (I continued) General will you answer me explicitly, did you inform General Howe that this was your design. He answered by no means. Then Genl. said I, do tell me what reasons you did assign to Genl Howe for so extraordinary a Measure, as sending for three members of Congress to be permitted to enter a garrisoned town and to confer with their own General, a Prisoner of War. To this he would give no answer But immediately began to urge the impossibility of our troops under such an Ignorant Commander in Chief, ever withstanding British Grenadiers & Light Infantry."

Even as Mr. Boudinot bridled, and surely we can see him now, these long years after, as General Lee "immediately put his hand into his Pocket & pulled out a manuscript of 2 or 3 sheets and said he charged it to me to hearken to what he would read to me and as soon as I returned to Jersey that I would repair to Congress & not leave them till I had prevailed upon them to adopt his Plan. He then read his manuscript, which was a laboured Argument to prove the impossibility of making head agt the British Army and that therefor we should set it down as certain that in the next Campaign we must be compleatly defeated. He therefor urged that congress would immediately have a strong fortress Built at Pittsburgh

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and also several hundred Boats, that they would order all the Riches of the Country to be sent there with the Old Men, Women & Children, and that when they found themselves driven there that Congress might take Boat & go down the Ohio to the Spanish Territory for Protection."

"The man's daft!" Can't you hear Mr. Boudinot saying it? Can't you imagine him going much further than that if he had known, at the time, that here was the man who was to be returned to the service of Washington and who, once again, would blunder on the field of Monmouth? Perhaps it was fortunate that Elias didn't know these or other things to be.

"The whole of this plan struck me in so absurd a light," wrote the emissary of the Commander, restraining himself beautifully, "added to the impropriety of reading such a thing to me who he knew was on my parole of honor within an Enemy's lines (for altho' it had not been formally regarded, yet I considered myself more firmly bounded if Possible than if it had been expressly given) that I could not but entertain the greatest Jealousy of the Integrity of Genl Lee. I answered without hesitation that I could not take any such message to Congress from him, or any other, without the knowledge of the British Generals. That I thought he had been very wrong to attempt any such Communication to me, knowing my Situation and that I should consider myself as having not heard it."

Boudinot still sputtered: "I wondered at his prudence in keeping such a writing in his Pocket, as the Discovery of it in his Pocket & in his hand writing might cost him his life. He then waived the Business & I left him. I endeavored to negotiate his exchange and it was agreed (Hypothetically) that it should take place for Major Genl Prescott subject to Genl Howe's approbation. Genl Howe objected, and ordered Genl Lee round by Sea to Philadelphia that he might be exchanged under his own eye. . . ."

Can it be that Howe distrusted Lee, too? Is it not possible that General Howe, by this time, may have known all about the plan Lee had hatched and took for granted that it was so

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crazy that neither Elias Boudinot, nor Congress, nor anybody else would take it seriously? Well, at any rate, Charles Lee didn't want that kind of a plan for his exchange—because, of all things, he was afraid he'd be seasick!

"Genl Lee (abhorring the Sea) applied to me by letter & most earnestly requested that he might go thro' New Jersey," wrote Mr. Boudinot, "under the care of a British officer, to which Genl Washington consented, and he accordingly went to Philadelphia. But no consent was obtained to the exchange."

Apparently Lee went back to New York. Time passed. In the Spring of 1778 it was evident that Washington was more than ready to let bygones be bygones, that he wanted the General back in his forces as much as Lee wanted to be back. When proposals were made for the exchange of prisoners by both sides, Elias Boudinot was ordered to Germantown to meet the British Commissary. "When I was setting off from Camp," Boudinot wrote, "Genl Washington called me into his Room, and in the most earnest manner intreated me, if I wished to gratify him, that I would obtain the Exchange of Genl Lee, for he never was more wanted by him than at the present moment, and desired that I would not suffer trifles to prevent it."

Elias had put up an argument, no doubt. "Let him stay there," he may have told Washington before. "He's no good. He played you dirty once before and he's liable to do it again. When he was with you before, he wouldn't take orders. He's never liked you, if you want to know. He talks behind your back every chance he gets. And there's another side of him, too, that's none too savory—look at that mess he got into up at the inn at Baskinridge! Why, if he'd been where he should have been that night and the day after, you wouldn't be all upset about him now! For that matter, I think the whole business has got him a little wobbly, if you know what I mean—look at that cockeyed plan he thought we'd fall for, all of us taking a boat-ride down the river! Can you imagine!"

If Elias Boudinot said anything at all, he didn't use those words, of course, for he was a part of his time if anybody was.

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Whatever he offered in the way of objections he swallowed and did as he was urged. "I accordingly went," he says, "and made a pretty considerable exchange of prisoners, but quite new propositions were made for the Exchange of Genl Lee, which neither the General or myself had ever thought of, after reducing the terms to as favorable a scale as I thought right, I agreed to it on Condition, that if General Washington was not pleased with the new plan and Notice was given of his refusal within 24 Hours the Exchange was to be void, without any charge of Failure on my part."

General Washington wanted General Lee on any terms, that was evident. Boudinot got back to his headquarters in the evening and on going to Washington's headquarters was immediately confronted with a demand for news on the Lee transaction, indicating that it was of greater importance than anything else. When Elias recited the conditions imposed by the British, there was no hesitation whatsoever on the part of the Commander. "Sit down at this Table," the Commissary quotes him, "and write a letter informing of my Confirmation of the Exchange & send one of my Horse Guards immediately to the Enemies lines with it. I assured him that next day would be time enough but he insisted on its being immediately done and I sent him accordingly, fixing the next day but one for Genl Lee's coming out to us. . . ."

On the day of the exchange, there was the greatest contrast of events in a few short hours. Charles Lee was the principal player in both scenes of the drama, one enacted on the field, with all the pomp and color that was arranged for the trading of prisoners of war, the other in Washington's house. In the first interval he was the great military leader whose help seemed to be so indispensable to the cause; in the second he was once again the Charles Lee of Basking Ridge. Boudinot's lines are priceless in portraying the change:

"When the day arrived the greatest preparations were made for his (Lee's) reception. All the principal Officers of the Army were drawn up in two lines, advanced of the Camp about 2 miles toward the enemy. Then the troops with the

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inferior Officers formed a line quite to head Quarters. All the Music of the Army attended. The General with a great number of principal Officers and their Suites, rode about four miles on the road towards Philadelphia and waited till Genl Lee appeared. Gen Washington dismounted & recd Gen Lee as if he had been his brother. He passed thro' the lines of Officers & the Army who all paid him the highest military Honors to Head Quarters, where Mrs Washington was."

Now for it!

"There he was entertained with an Elegant Dinner, and the Music Playing the whole time. A Room was assigned him. Back of Mrs Washington's Sitting Room and all his Baggage was stowed in it. The next morning he lay very late and Breakfast was detained for him. When he came out he looked as dirty as if he had been in the Street all night. Soon after I discovered that he had brought a miserable dirty hussy with him from Philadelphia (a British Sergeants Wife) and had actually taken her into his Room by a Back Door and she had slept with him that night."

Poor Mr. Boudinot! How very shocked you were! And yet, you had suspected as much, hadn't you? Perhaps you had no idea that General Lee would go so far as to defile your Commander's headquarters or that there would be such scandalous goings-on in the chamber next-door to Mrs. Washington's best sitting-room but you knew what really had happened at Widow White's, didn't you? Come on now, be truthful about it! Oh, all right, then, let it go. But after all, Mr. Boudinot, Mrs. Washington had eyes—she heard some of the talk, surely!

As for talk, General Lee did his own share, perhaps not about his bedroom biophilism but certainly on the same old themes, the crack-pot plan he wanted Congress to know about and the inefficiency of Washington.

Perhaps it is not quite fair to conclude that the majority of schoolbooks have had little to say concerning Charles Lee. It may be that memory is faulty, that what he was and what he did received due attention in the painting of a broader

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canvas. However, it does seem that because the General's conduct was inexplicable, just when achievement could have crowded out the deplorable episodes of his career, the authorities adopted a policy of what was unknown wouldn't hurt. For that matter, it would seem that the whole campaign, or at least the affair at Monmouth, was ever glossed over for those living within reach of its locale and that a keen interest was sacrificed when it could have been kindled by those who could have said "Let's go see the battlefield itself!" just as they could have urged a visit to Rocky Hill.

To be sure, those with gumption, once they had become suspicious, could have hunted down the sources and could have learned that what happened at Monmouth was just across the hill and that General Lee was more than a leader who all but threw the whole Revolution away. Before Monmouth, however, Lee was misbehaving again and what Elias Boudinot wrote of all that in his Journal, throws new light on the man.

On the heels of the discovery Mr. Boudinot made as to what and who kept the General late for breakfast, the Commissary General reports Lee's appointment to the command of the right wing of the army. "But before he took charge of it," he wrote, "he requested leave to go to Congress at York Town; which was readily granted. Before he went, I had an interview with him. He expressed himself under the greatest obligations to me and assured me that he never should forget my kindness." Then he wanted to know, in the same breath, if Mr. Boudinot had made his "communication" known to Congress and what that assemblage had thought of the plan. The Commissary quickly informed him that he hadn't told Congress a word of it, adding that if Lee were wise, he wouldn't say anything either.

The horoscope of some reveals that the more you impress them with something they ought not to do, the more determined they will be to accomplish it. Charles Lee was one of that stripe. "He said he was going to Congress for that purpose and he *never* would not rest till it was done," the lines of the

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Recollections carry on. "He was more than ever convinced that nothing else could save us, that he found the Army in a worse condition than he expected and that General Washington was not fit to command a Sergeant's Guard. This mortified me greatly," declares Mr. Boudinot, and no wonder.

"After all the kindness shown him by Genl Washington," puts it mildly, indeed. Asked concerning his reception in Philadelphia and if he had seen General Howe, Lee declared that Howe had talked with him privately. During this interview, Lee said, "Genl Howe began to talk upon the Claim of Independence by the Americans" and asserted that "he thought it one of the most absurd and hopeless expectations that could enter into the mind of sensible Men." "And as for you, Lee," Howe was quoted to Mr. Boudinot, "What in the Devil could get into you to be so crazy, who ought to know better." "Lee answered," the Journal goes on, "that He thought it a very wise measure and that if it had not been done, the Americans would have been without excuse. The General replied; why what end can it answer, do you think there is the most distant possibility of their succeeding, to which Genl Lee replied, They were perfectly right. In case of a Treaty what have they to give up, for what may they insist on receiving, had they made no claim to Independence."

Thus was General Lee, on the eve of his return to the service of the patriots, putting notions of a treaty into General Howe's head, implying that the claim for independence was insincere, that wily political minds were declaring for freedom in the hope that King George would give them all they wanted without separation from the Mother Country. General Howe took Lee at his word.

"O' Sir said the General. But I supposed they aimed at insisting on separation from the Mother Country. But in this view it may be well enough." Thus, said Lee to Boudinot, they parted, General Howe thinking enough of the conversation and its disclosures to send Lee some liquors which he never got. "General Howe sent him," Mr. Boudinot recalls, "a store of Wine, Spirit, Porter, &c, &c to take out with him,

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but the British Soldiers finding out, that it was Stored in the Cellar of the House where he lodged; broke into it the night before he came away, & stole the whole of it. All this," Boudinot says quaintly, "increased my suspicions of Genl Lee exceedingly, and I watched him with a Jealous Eye."

Lee went to Congress, sure enough, asking for a committee to meet and confer with him. "The President Mr. Laurence was directed to this Service, to whom Genl Lee communicated his Plan, which disgusted Mr. Laurence so greatly that he would not even report it to Congress. This lessened the General so greatly in the Eyes of Congress," declares the Commissary General, "that they never paid much respect to him afterwards."

Muttering and grumbling, Lee returned to the army and took command of the right wing.

"He immediately began to rebel agt Genl Washington," says Mr. Boudinot, "& to quarrel with the Marquise LaFayette. He assured himself that Genl Washington was ruining the whole cause." Washington, Lee declared, was looking forward to the British evacuating Philadelphia and going to New York, "and of course, strengthening his left, while the right was totally unguarded." Lee predicted that "the Enemy would press over to Chester & come suddenly on their right wing and we should be wholly overthrown." Still rankled over the snub he felt he had received at Hopewell, Lee said he had "urged this in council, but that he had been overruled & there fore was no longer accountable."

If this was the actual expression used by General Lee, he seems to have formed a more accurate measure of himself than he had revealed at any time before.

Washington had a headquarters in Englishtown which served him before and after the Battle of Monmouth. His letter, written to the President of Congress and describing the action, is dated July 1, 1778, at Englishtown. This was the third day after the main army, crossing Coryell's ferry, now Lambertville, had proceeded by way of Hopewell, Rocky Hill, Kingston and Cranbury, and had overtaken the British,

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on retreat from Philadelphia to New York, a maneuver Lee had branded unthinkable in his talk with Elias Boudinot.

The Commander's report is a long one, describing plans and their execution in a decisive victory that is well known. In it there are references to General Lee, of course. "I detached Major-general Lee," wrote Washington, "with two brigades, to join the marquis (Lafayette) at Englishtown, on whom of course the command of the whole devolved." In this connection Boudinot is more to the point: "When the British Army actually passed thro' Jersey & Genl Washington by his great precaution, had advanced two Brigades toward the Delaware, and therefor overtook the British at freehold, Genl Lee was greatly mortified & at first refused to take the Command of the advanced Party & it was given to the Marquiss LaFayette. But on finding that the advanced Army was reinforced & raised to a very respectable Command, he insisted on the Command, and to keep peace it was given to him."

Now, when smooth action was necessary, Lee, by changing his mind, had Washington in a tight corner all over again. Gordon has pointed out that Lee "had declined the command of the advance party, under the opinion, that it was not designed for effective service." It is possible that he wanted a showy assignment or none at all; it is more likely that he disliked to be part of an action against which he had counseled, perhaps because it was an old dream of Washington, from the first council at Valley Forge. But Lee, "perceiving, soon after its march, that much importance was attached to it, and dreading lest his reputation might suffer, he earnestly solicited to be placed at its head."

What reputation was Lee thinking about? His military background, obviously, and nothing that had to do with tavern widows or British sergeants' wives!

"To relieve his feelings, without wounding those of LaFayette," continues the *Gazetteer*, "Washington detached the former, with two other brigades, to support the Marquis. Lee would, of course, have the direction of the whole front division, amounting now to five thousand men; but he stipu-

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lated, that if any enterprise had been formed by LaFayette, it should be executed as if the commanding officer had not been changed."

This necessitated some fancy letter-writing. However, inasmuch as it was Lafayette who first had mentioned Lee's embarrassment in leading a movement he did not approve, Washington counted on the understanding of the Marquis in his predicament. The Commander "could not, with justice or propriety, recall the orders given to LaFayette" and so sought harmony in giving Lee the two brigades, with orders to join the advanced detachments, "when, of course, his rank would entitle him to take command of the whole." Washington wrote, "explaining the dilemma, and counting upon his cheerful acquiescence."

There is no need to dwell on what happened then, except as to Lee and the forgotten towns through which the action was moving. Sir Henry Clinton moved his British troops with great deliberation, passing through Haddonfield, Mount Holly, Slabtown and Crosswicks, to Allentown and Imlays-town, attained June 24. Dickenson and Maxwell retired before Sir Henry, smashing bridges as they went, slowing up that long queue, "not only all the wheel-carriages, of every department, but also the bat-horses; a train which, as the country admitted but of one route for carriages," as Sir Henry puts it in his famous alibi letter to Lord George Germaine, "extended near twelve miles." The task of moving the baggage, a dirty job, had been assigned to General Knyphausen, then in command of the 17th Light Dragoons, 2nd Battalion of Light Infantry, Hessian Yagers, 1st and 2nd Brigades of British, Stern's and Loo's brigades of Hessians, the Pennsylvania Loyalists, the West Jersey Volunteers and the Maryland Loyalists, an oddly assorted lot.

Lafayette remained the perfect soldier, no matter what he thought of Lee. When Clinton faced about, on the road to Middletown, to offset the attack on his flanks, the Marquis saw a chance for quick and decisive action but he did not act alone; instead, he rode quickly up to Lee and asked permission

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to make the attempt. Lee demurred. "Sir," he said, "you do not know British soldiers; we can not stand against them; we shall certainly be driven back at first, and we must be cautious." "It may be so, General," replied Lafayette, "but British soldiers have been beaten, and they may be again; at any rate, I am disposed to make the trial."

Just a short time before, when General Wayne was getting along famously, Lee sent him word to make only a feigned attack and not push so far ahead. Mad Anthony obeyed, without hesitation, but he wondered what on earth General Lee was trying to do. Lafayette, who was thoroughly aware of the conspiracy against Washington that had progressed sufficiently to suggest the name of Lee as his successor, wondered if the plot had been plucked in the bud, after all, and if Lee wasn't juggling matters toward an American defeat rather than a victory that would further distinguish the Commander. Just after Lafayette had been denied permission for the attack he wanted to make, a messenger appeared, sent by Washington for information, and the Marquis seized the opportunity to send the Commander word that he'd better come and take a look at the way matters were going.

Lafayette wasn't sure if there was new treachery at hand or if Lee were motivated by cowardice. Elias Boudinot has something to say on that at this juncture. "Genl Lee accordingly came up with Genl Clinton near freehold Court House," declares the *Journal*, and then: "Genl Lee had considerable Military Knowledge & did very well on a small scale. But I have no doubt that whenever any thing on a very large scale struck him that a partial Lunacy took place."

Lee weakened Wayne's detachment on the left by ordering Wesson, Stewart and Livingston to the support of the right. Then, he claimed, he saw a large body of the British army swinging back toward the Courthouse. Disconcerted, he ordered his right to fall back. General Scott had crossed a swamp and was in position and Maxwell, too, had attained a height, ready for action, when Lee ordered Scott back to cover and Maxwell had no recourse but to follow. As if he

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had not been responsible, Lee, seeing the withdrawal of both Scott and Maxwell, sent word to Lafayette to fall back to the Courthouse. The Marquis, reluctantly obeying, found out the whole right wing, under Lee's command, was retreating, when he got there. There was a brief respite, as the day was exceedingly warm, and both armies needed a breathing spell.

In his report to Congress, Washington wrote, after disclosing how he had sent word to Lee to move forward to attack "unless there should be very powerful reasons to the contrary; acquainting him at the same time that I was marching to support him," that after a march of five miles, "to my great surprise and mortification, I met the whole advanced corps retreating, and, as I was told, by Gen. Lee's orders, without having made any opposition, except one fire." Washington made no charges against Lee in this immediate connection, saying only that with the help of General Green's artillery and Lord Stirling's batteries of cannon, he was able to achieve a rally. Here certainly was the display of an even temper of the first water, the calm after a storm, a storm whose thunder and lightning were left for others to describe.

Thomas Gordon hurries over it by saying: "Washington rode to the rear of the division, which was closely pressed. There he met Lee, to whom he spoke in terms of some warmth, implying disapprobation of his conduct." After the rally, "General Lee was then directed to take proper measures, with the residue of his force, to stop the British column on that ground, and the commander-in-chief rode back, to arrange the rear division of the army."

Lossing says that Washington received word of the apparent rout of the Continentals from a countryman, mounted on a fleet horse, and that Washington couldn't believe his ears. "He spurred forward," this historian goes on, "and when about half way between the meeting-house and the morass, he met the head of the first retreating column. He was greatly alarmed on finding the advanced corps falling back upon the main army without notice, thereby endangering the order of the whole. Giving a hasty order to the commander of the

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first retreating division to halt upon the eminence, Washington, with his staff, pushed across the causeway to the rear of the flying column, where he met Lee at the head of the second division of the retreating forces. The commander-in-chief was fearfully aroused by the conduct of that officer, and, as he rode up to Lee, he exclaimed, in words of bitter anger and tone of withering rebuke, 'Sir, I desire to know what is the reason, and whence arises this disorder and confusion!' Stung, not so much by these words as by the manner of Washington, Lee retorted harshly, and a few angry words passed between them. It was no time to dispute, for the enemy was within fifteen minutes' march of them."

Lossing, having consulted innumerable authorities in the preparation of his account, pictures Washington, after setting matters in order, riding back to Lee and pointing to the rallied troops, asking: "Will you, sir, command in that place?" With apparent eagerness Lee said he would. "Then," said Washington, "I expect you to check the enemy immediately." "Your command shall be obeyed," Lee answered, "and I will not be the first to leave the field."

Added details with some variance are to be found in the *Historical Collections*. There, it is disclosed more particularly among incidents recounted from the battle by Dr. Samuel Forman, of Freehold, whose father David Forman, with Peter Wikoff, acted as guides for Washington, that almost as the action started, just after breakfast, Lee retreated all of three miles to the vicinity of the parsonage of Tennent Church, said to have been more than a mile from the church itself, which stands today much as it did when the battle was fought. "What is the meaning of this?" Washington seems to have demanded of Lee. The General was nonplussed and could reply only, "Sir, sir!"

Weems' *Life of Washington* puts some grossly insulting words in Lee's mouth but from the testimony of General Mercer later on, it would seem that much was forgiven, or at least forgotten, inasmuch as afterward Lee "displayed all his skill and courage" in obedience to Washington's orders.

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The Commander had to repeat his query, "What is all that confusion for, and retreat?" Lieutenant Colonel Brookes testified later that Lee blamed contradictory intelligence and the disobeying of his orders. The same soldier recalled that "His Excellency, showing considerable warmth, said he was sorry Gen. Lee undertook the command, unless he meant to fight the enemy, or words to that effect. Gen. Lee observed," Brookes claimed, "that it was his private opinion it was not for the interests of America or the army (I cannot say which) to have a general action, but notwithstanding was willing to obey his orders at all times; but in the situation he had been in, he thought it by no means warrantable to bring on an action. . . ."

There is a trace of venom, a sarcastic departing shot in Lee's assertion, when he agreed to take over the rallied troops, that he would not be the first to leave the field. No doubt that is why some authorities, quoting Hamilton as declaring, "I will stay with you, my dear general, and die with you—let us all die rather than retreat," direct the speech to Lee, rather than Washington. Interviews with those remembering the battle indicate that Washington rode away without retort, for the battle was by no means won, with the rally, but they also picture devoted, fiery Alexander riding up to Lee, in great heat, to voice the snappy come-back. Actually, Lee was the last to leave that field, Washington sending him to arrange his worn-out troops back of Englishtown.

Lafayette, however, talking one Sunday morning, August 15, 1824, on the piazza of the home of Vice President Daniel D. Tompkins, remembered the Lee incident as "the only instance wherein he had heard the General (Washington) swear." The Commander, perhaps thinking of all he had chosen to overlook in Lee, all he had done to restore him to his position in spite of a host of advisers who cautioned him against it, probably put everything he had into the epithet closing the altercation:

"You damned poltroon!"

The battle went on till nightfall and Washington postponed

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a second attack until next morning. Such an action was eliminated when, with the first light of dawn, the British camp was shown to be deserted. Clinton's hosts had folded tents like the Arabs and had stolen silently off toward Sandy Hook. Despite serious losses, in personnel if not in numbers, it often has been said that the enemy suffered more from the heat than from the Continentals, because of woolen uniforms.

After Washington's first indignation at beholding the spectacle of General Lee in retreat before the enemy, he is said to have been quite willing to forget, all over again. If Lee "had been actuated by the same noble and generous spirit, all would have been well." But Charles Lee wasn't like that. Concluding his consideration of Lee's peculiarities, as he knew of them personally, Elias Boudinot reveals that the General had a bad day from the start of it. Continuing after his mention of the "partial lunacy," Mr. Boudinot wrote, "His behaviour this morning discovered this state of mind, which might have been increased from the peculiarity of his situation and his exalted idea of the prowess of British Troops. In the midst of the Engagement he rode up to a Lt Coll of my Acquaintance who had a single field piece firing and called to him. 'Coll have you seen anything improper in my Conduct this morning? The Coll (who had been convinced of something wrong in the Genl all the morning, yet not choosing to acknowledge it) answered, no by no means. Well then said the General, do you remember that. Such an Extraordinary question from a Commander in Chief of a division, under such Extraordinary Circumstances, is full proof that he must have felt something unusual in himself.

"The issue was," said Mr. Boudinot finally, "that he was beat, and had not Genl Washington have come up on a lucky moment & turned the fortune of the Day, It might have been fatal to America."

It was still the day of the affair at Monmouth when Lee wrote the first of the letters that were to spell his suspension from the army. He demanded an apology, or its equivalent, from Washington, for remarks made publicly on the battlefield. The Commander replied that he considered Lee's de-

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mands impudent and said further that the words he had used were warranted by the circumstances. He charged Lee with a breach of orders, misbehavior before the enemy in not attacking, and in making an "unnecessary, disorderly and shameful retreat." General Lee came right back, adding insult to injury. "You cannot afford me greater pleasure," he said, "than in giving me the opportunity of showing to America the sufficiency of her respective servants. I trust that temporary power of office, and the tinsel dignity attending it, will not be able, by all the mists they can raise, to obfuscate the bright rays of truth." Two days after the battle, Lee was still writing, this time becoming more offensive and demanding a court of inquiry.

Washington, with members of his staff, was in the dining hall of the old inn at Englishtown. There was a hurried consultation and, as the result of it, General Lee got what he asked for, and more. Colonel Scammel was despatched with a signed order for Lee's arrest, on three charges, disobedience of orders in not attacking the enemy June 28, after repeated instructions, misbehaviour before the enemy on the same day, making a disorderly and shameful retreat, and disrespect shown the commander in chief in two of the letters. Colonel Scammel hurried off around the corner. Enough was enough . . . at last.

The court-martial proceedings that followed would seem casual: there were a number of sessions, as they could be fitted in, with Washington insisting on fair treatment and complete testimony. The first sitting was a Brunswick July 4, with Lord Stirling, who lived near enough to Basking Ridge to remember something that happened there, presiding over four brigadiers and eight colonels. "The peculiar situation of Gen. Lee at this time, requires that I should say nothing of his conduct," Washington wrote Congress. "He is now under arrest. The charges against him, with such sentence as the court-martial may decree in his case, shall be transmitted, for the approbation or disapprobation of congress, as soon as it shall have passed."

Lee, obviously surprised that Washington would go so far

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as to arrest him, made the best show he could. "He suggested a variety of reasons for justifying his retreat," says one account, "which, if they do not absolutely establish its propriety, give it so questionable a form, as to render it probable that a public examination never would have taken place, could his proud spirit have stooped to offer explanation, instead of outrage, to the commander-in-chief."

The court sat from time to time until August 12 when it found that General Lee was guilty of all the charges, sentencing him to be suspended from any command for the term of twelve months. This verdict, which is reported as giving general satisfaction, for "it was believed that he was aiming at supreme command," was confirmed by Congress December 5, by a vote of thirteen to seven. The General left the army and, as Charles, went back to his estate in Berkley, Virginia, brooding and secluded. Later he went to Philadelphia where he took lodging in the Slate Roof House, once occupied by William Penn, where he died October 2, 1782, broken, obscure and in poverty which was a marked contrast to his former position.

Thus passed the trouble-maker, so much akin to ambitious Horatio Gates. Thus, a pitiful figure who sold his glory for a snarl, a great man who had become a forlorn nobody, but whose genius was still good enough to crowd out all the rest in the estimate of the man he compelled to pull down his star, left the world to wonder about him. Charles Lee, who had gone places and done things and couldn't forget it, whose interference was rebuked even when, at Williamsburg, he advised military action that brought the wrath of the Council of Safety on his head, whose letters threatened many a friendship and spelled his own doom, remains a question mark.

How could the man whose request to enlist volunteers to march on New York was approved by Washington early in 1776, defying the protests of the Committee of Safety and the threats of Captain Parker to fire the town at the first sight of a rebel soldier—how could such a man embody so many opposites? How could the soldier who had written

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"Why would you be over persuaded by men of inferior judgment to your own?" in a letter to Washington in 1776 declare to Elias Boudinot so shortly after that the Commander wasn't fit to lead a sergeant's guard? How could the "able and efficient officer" with campaigns all over the Continent behind him and with a record that earned him the name of "Boiling Water" among the Mohawks, get into such scrapes that authorities were led to praise and damn him in one breath? And why was it, apart from a Churchman's feeling that salvation in no way depends upon the personal character of its priests, that Washington was determined to move mountains in order to have Lee with him in his service?

We had been asking these questions, over and over, when one day Alden Cottrell disclosed that he had come upon a book, in Burlington, in which there was the craziest picture he had ever seen. "It's General Lee, all right," Alden said, "and that's all I was interested in. The book is still there." So, on a darksome night, we stole to Burlington and hopefully consulted the proprietor of a little antique shop, lit only by oil lamps. Yes, the book was still available, he thought, beginning to rummage behind odd pieces of furniture, old china and the usual array. We hurried away with both the "portrait" and the book, leaving the man in the shop a little bewildered by what must have seemed a peculiar quest. It may be that he still believes we played a joke on Alden.

Outside, the book is titled *Girdlestone's Facts, &c.* On the title page is one of those long-winded descriptions of what is to follow: "Facts Tending To Prove That General Lee Was Never Absent From This Country For Any Length of Time During The Years 1767, 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772 And That He Was The Author Of Junius," by Thomas Girdlestone, M.D. Under the author's name is written, in fine type, "How many of every rank and profession are too indolent to search for information; who judge by hearsay, and voluntarily renounce the right of thinking for themselves." The book was printed in London, in 1813, "for P. Martin, 33, Orchard Street, Corner of Oxford Street."

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If there are mysteries hovering among the recollections of General Lee, there are as many, almost, in the book itself. The pages run to 138, following an obvious insertion of the "portrait" and "advertisement" and then there is a preface over which someone, perhaps "Glover, author of *Leonidas*," wrote the title, also dated 1813, in careful handscript, "Memoirs of a Lity & Pol Character from the Design of Sir Robt Walpole in 1742 to the establishment of Ld Chatham's 2d admn in 1737 and Strictures on some of the most Distinguished Men of that time." On the last page of Dr. Girdlestone's writings there is an entry in a different hand stressing the oddities of General Lee's last testament which, it is pointed out, were published in the *Gents Magazine* for 1785. This portion of the book runs to 118, after which comes "An Inquiry Concerning The Author of The Letters of Junius by a Celebrated Literary and Political Character." The latter is revealed as Glover, the author of "*Leonidas*," in the same hand that inserted comment on the will.

This "Inquiry" was published in London in 1814, "printed by T. Bensley, Bolt Court, Fleet Street, for John Murray, Albemarle Street." There are pages numbered to 115 and then, after a portrait under which the name, "De Lolme," is found, there is still another book, "Arguments and Facts Demonstrating that the Letters of Junius were written by John Lewis De Lolme, Advocate" accompanied by "Memoirs of 'That Most Ingenius Foreigner,'" by Thomas Busby, Mus. Doc., author of a translation of *Lucretius*, and published in London in 1816 by Sherwood, Neely and Jones, Paternoster Row, and J. Ridgeway, Piccadilly. Now the contents run to Page 228. Perhaps to many the combination would present no puzzle at all but to us the compilation, seemingly put together by someone other than Dr. Girdlestone in a curious combining of all the approaches to the subject, presents a problem for study by itself when there is more leisure.

It is recalled that General Lee was one of several persons suspected of writing disturbing letters to the newspapers over the pseudonym, Junius. Whether Dr. Girdlestone is right in

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his proofs, contending that Lee was in England in the years the letters appeared, or whether the author whose pen seems to have created such a disturbance, may seem to have little concern for those who wonder about Charles Lee in New Jersey except in the consideration that it was Lee's bent for vilifying correspondence that brought him to court-martial. Some declare Lee won the alliance with France and was among those behind the French Revolution! Of greater moment is the picture, showing the General with a little dog that singularly resembles him, a man with a snaky pigtail and pipestem legs, certainly a figure with little appeal such as Lee was said to have for amorous females. One might be inclined to dismiss the likeness as cruel and unjust if the advertisement which follows it did not say that "the engraving is taken from a caricature drawing, by Barham Rushbrooke Esq. of West Stowe, near Bury . . . a likeness taken on General Lee's return from Poland, in his uniform as aid-de-camp to Stanislaus king of Poland." "But though it was designed as a caricature, it is allowed, by all who knew General Lee," the explanation continues, "to be the only successful delineation either of his countenance or person."

So General Lee actually looked like that! Despite the interest which arises from the labored arguments which follow as to whether Lee was Junius or not, as well as manifold contradictions that arise from some of the General's letters, written after his capture, our recurrent examination of that picture must ever invoke misgivings.

Sir Charles Bunbury, who loaned a letter written by General Lee to his sister in 1758 when Lee was serving under General Braddock, told Dr. Girdlestone that he was logical in his conclusion that Lee was the writer of the letters signed "Junius." "Lee," wrote Sir Charles, "very early began to abuse his superiors, and was not very nice in the terms he made use of; that his turn for satire and levelling disposition, coupled with his mode of expression in his private letters, as well as his conversation, afforded much presumptive ground to conclude that Lee was the author of them, without taking

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into account the testimony of the American gentleman, which, if he was a man of probity, was decisive." Sir Charles, according to the letter written by the General to his sister, was Lee's uncle.

"You should have heard from me before this," wrote Lee from Albany, in September, 1758, "but I really had it not in my power, as our illustrious chief thinks it necessary to conceal from the officers of his army, the time when each packet is to sail, dreading very justly that some truths might be sent over not altogether to his honour, advantage, and glory." There's a full dash of sarcasm, superiority, there. "We therefore are obliged to seize the opportunities of private hands." This was written after Lee had been wounded at Ticonderoga, "a musket shot which passed through my body and broke two of my ribs." Bewailing the loss of many officers, Lee wrote further, "As to a detail of our affairs or rather the blunders of this d--n'd beastly poltroon (who to the scourge and dishonour of the nation is unhappily at the head of our army by an instrument of divine vengeance to bring about national losses and national dishonour) I refer you to the narrative here enclosed, a copy of which I desire you will transmit to Col. Armiger. I shall not be ashamed should it be communicated to others, as I think silence would be some disgrace to a man that is not an absolute dependent and mercenary, and who has been an eye witness to such superlative blundering, pusillanimity, and infamy. . . . If our booby in chief had only acted with the spirit and prudence of an old woman, their whole country must inevitably this year have been reduced. . . ."

To argue Lee's handwriting, his acquaintance with literary figures overseas and his similarities of expression as clues to his poison pen and its disturbance of the nobles and even the King, is far from the midlands, far from the climax at English-town. The point is that in some strange manner we came upon the book and from it have piled puzzle on puzzle, with Charles Lee first damning his patriot friends and then praising them, and usually, in between, roasting his chief. Blaming

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"the rascallity of my own troops" for his being taken prisoner, Lee wrote Captain Kennedy, declaring himself to "have the consolation of thinking . . . that I was engaged in the noblest cause that ever interested mankind."

Perhaps the answer lies in Virginia, where Lee lived two years before he returned to soldiery. Perhaps Lee knew that his convictions and emotions were horribly tangled and that there were times when he could do nothing about them. Perhaps Washington concluded that a general with talent is always deserving of one more chance, or that it was better to have a leader like Lee in sight than beyond his reach. Perhaps there were moments when, as Boudinot so readily concludes, the General was—well, Mr. Boudinot would have tapped his forehead. It is all very strange.

Lossing's footnote is somewhat harsh. The General, he has written, "was a brilliant man in many things, but his life exhibited a most perfect specimen of antitheses of character. He was bad in morals and manners, profane in language, and neither feared nor loved God or man." In the will Lee penned in a careful hand only a few days before he died, he did, however, bequeath his soul to the Almighty and his body to the earth, saying:

"I desire most earnestly that I may not be buried in any church or churchyard, or within a mile of any Presbyterian or Anabaptist meeting-house; for, since I have resided in this country, I have kept so much bad company when living, that I do not choose to continue it when dead."

"A large concourse of citizens" whom death invited to attend the commander life had thrown into the discard, mourned at the obsequies which preceded burial, with military honors, in the yard of Old Christ Church, Philadelphia. In the chattering group were some, probably women, who would not have agreed with Mrs. Hamilton's description and who said that the General, when dying, sighed, whispering, "Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!"

Chapter 22

JERSEY TO JERSEY: TWO MOLLY PITCHERS

"Ah, let not censure term our fate our choice,
The stage but echoes back the public voice;
The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,
For we that live to please, must please to live . . ."

—SAMUEL JOHNSON: 1709-1784

ONE DAY as we were driving along the road above Freehold, toward Tennent, we passed a somewhat modern-looking structure, just off the railroad track, with a sign labeling it, with great assurance, "Molly Pitcher's Well."

"That's a laugh," said our companion. "It's a wonder you haven't fallen for that hokum, too."

"What hokum?" we asked, not bridling at all since we knew what was coming and what we were going to say.

"That hokum about Molly Pitcher. If there was any such person, which most of us doubt, it's certain she didn't do all some people say she did. Probably if she did exist at all, she was a camp follower. As for that odd-looking object being the well from which she brought water to the soldiers—"

"Wait a minute," we broke in, without ceremony. "What about that plaque on the Monmouth battle monument, showing Molly in action at a cannon?"

"Somebody else was overcredulous, too," we were informed. "That's the way it goes. People like to believe such things, so historians feed them what the public wants and they swallow it whole, with no concern for facts."

We don't like debunkers. And while certain fanciful details have been added to some of the figures and events in which they took part in and around the midlands, we refused to take a punch like that, lying down. "Now, listen," we said. "There *was* a Molly Pitcher. Better still, there were two Mollys! What do you think of *that*?"

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"Who says so?" was the natural return.

"William Davison Perrine."

"And who on earth is William Davison Perrine?"

At that moment we were none too certain. Now we know. For, having heard of Mr. Perrine, first from Alden Cottrell and later from Jim Vandenberg, we made it our business to find out on one bleak December Sunday. Alden said he was the author of an interesting pamphlet of historical importance, throwing light on the whole Molly Pitcher story and adding a few interesting theories. Jim declared he was a resident of Princeton Junction who had been meandering in lost cemeteries and digging up a lot of family records which he had been sending to the newspapers.

According to his own account, in tracing the Perrines from the Old Stone House on Staten Island, Mr. Perrine was born January 6, 1875, at Manalapan, and lived later on the Homestead farm at Perrineville. He was a railroad man and once an employee of the State, he said. But that afternoon, when we sought out his house, we found it up a tiny road, near Grover's Mills, where but a few weeks before Orson Wells convinced the country that the destruction of the Continent had begun at the hands of invading Martians.

Grover's Mills seemed to have withstood the shock rather well. The mill which had given the village varied names through two centuries of owners stood undamaged beside the sleepy pond that operates it on weekdays under the direction of William Dennison who, Jim said, lived over in Cranbury. The old millstones, no longer used, were still propped up as buffers for passing wheels at the turn of the road. Some there were who told us of the hundreds of automobiles that had blocked the roads late that Sunday night. The man who had posed with a shotgun, ostensibly to menace the mystery from the skies admitted it but declared that he had felt sorry for those photographers who had come all the way from New York. The only relic of the excitement was a little sign, beside the drive of a house up from the pond: Where the name of the owner, Philip White, had appeared before the siege,

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Mr. White had added a name for the cottage itself, "Martian Hoax."

Mr. Perrine's house was even smaller. The front door was closed permanently for the winter, for the wind sweeps across the hills there. At the back, punched with some instrument like an ice-pick, Mr. Perrine had drawn his coat of arms and the old spelling of the name, Perrin.

Mr. Perrine has had a lot of fun writing of his discoveries and disposing of a few pamphlets to those who are interested. Too many seemed to be inclined to dismiss his efforts with the assertion that he "gets most of what he writes from books." That criticism was amusing for there have been times when the opposite detraction has been laid upon our doorstep. Some declare for history that comes from old deeds, old records, even old books, with nothing of the scene as it may be found today. All cannot be satisfied. If we live to please, we cannot please to live, all the time.

As Mr. Perrine has remarked, those who know anything about Molly Pitcher at all, know she took her husband's place at the cannon at the Battle of Monmouth, but little more. Some experts have concluded that Molly Pitcher, of New Jersey, and Captain Molly, of New York, were the same woman, he says, because they were both born in Pennsylvania, both had husbands named John who were gunners, and both took their husbands' places in the emergency, one at Fort Washington and the other in the shadow of Old Tennent.

Mary Ludwig, the New Jersey Molly, lived in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She became the bride of John Hays, an apprentice to a barber there, working in the vicinity of the home of her father, John Ludwig. When the Revolution came, Mr. Perrine's research shows, Hays enlisted as a gunner in Proctor's artillery. That was December 1, 1775. Two years later, or a little more, he re-enlisted as a private in the infantry, serving under General William Irvin, also from Carlisle. John Hays was at Valley Forge and was probably as cold, hungry and ragged as the other Continentals.

"Meanwhile," according to the man from Grover's Mills,

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"Mary was obliged on account of lack of employment to return to her friends. Later on she joined her husband in the army, as did many other wives of soldiers of that period, and made herself useful by doing cooking and washing." Which occupations are much more respectable than those many would assign her.

It was that Sunday of the Battle of Monmouth, June 28, 1778, said to be one of the hottest days New Jersey has recorded, that Mary Hays made her bid for fame. Soldiers were dropping all around, not from bullets in some instances, but from thirst and overexertion. "Mary," says Mr. Perrine, "began carrying water from a near-by spring. Her constant rushing back and forth with water gave rise to the nickname of Molly Pitcher, which has become a household name in America."

Our pamphleteer has made no bones about calling Molly the greatest heroine of the Revolution. "While returning from the spring with water," he recalled, "she was terrified to see that her husband had been wounded. There being no one left to load the cannon to which he was assigned, the officer in command ordered its removal. She knew how to load a cannon as well as any man in the company, and she stood by her cannon and rammed it until the Battle of Monmouth was won. She was quite as real as Washington himself. Washington was pleased with the heroic matron and extended generous thanks for her services."

These are the facts that nearly everybody knows, whether they conclude Molly to have been real or the principal character of a lively war-time episode. Mr. Perrine, once he had begun his quest, didn't stop there. He pointed out, however, that Mary Hays didn't indulge in all the heroics that have been attributed to her and that her manning of the cannon was not over the body of a dead husband. "After the battle," he wrote in his pamphlet, "Mary, with her wounded husband, returned to Carlisle, where she cared for him up to the time of his death."

Mary married again and this time, life was less colorful.

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George McCauley was the second husband, added in 1792. He too had been a soldier and knew John Hays well. But, as Mr. Perrine put it, it was said "that George loved work so well that he could lie down and sleep alongside of it."

Mary did odd jobs at Carlisle and George was content to take it easy. But his life of ease didn't last long and Molly was widowed a second time. "From this time on life for Molly Pitcher was anything but rosy and serene," Mr. Perrine disclosed. "It was a case of hard work from sunrise to sunset."

Obviously, the episode of Monmouth was forgotten already and, if it wasn't, it didn't loom large in that interval. Mr. Perrine found an ancient account book in the County Commissioner's office at Carlisle and from a yellowing page discovered that the County Treasurer had paid her on March 29, 1811, for scrubbing the Court House. She was paid fifteen dollars then and a small balance five days later. The name of Molly McCauley next appeared under date of August 5, 1813, when she and others received payment for cleaning, washing and whitewashing public buildings. As Mr. Perrine said, it was evident that public buildings were thoroughly cleaned every six months in those days.

It was not till some years later that it was discovered that the woman who had helped win the Battle of Monmouth, by her example of great courage, as well as her service at John Hays' cannon, was eking out a living as a drudge and slavey. However, in February, 1822, the legislature of Pennsylvania passed an act for the relief of Molly McCauley, the State Treasurer granting her forty dollars, payable in half yearly installments, an annuity paid until her death in 1832. Under date of January 26, that year, Mr. Perrine found an obituary in the *Carlisle American Volunteer*. It read:

"Died on Sunday last in this borough, at an advanced age, Mrs. Molly McCauley. She lived during the days of the American Revolution, sharing its hardships, and witnessed many scenes of blood and carnage. To the sick and wounded she was an efficient aid. Mary had one child, a son by her first marriage, who served as a soldier in the war of 1812, many

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years ago." The Reverend Joseph A. Murray, of Carlisle, added a detail to the death notice. "Very distinctly do I remember her son, John L. Hays," he said. "The initial L is for Ludwig. He was named after his maternal grandfather. He was tall and straight and was called Sergeant Hays, as he occupied that position in the old infantry company."

One wonders, naturally enough, what happened to John Ludwig Hays and where he was when the exploits of his heroic mother seemed all but forgotten.

Years ago, in reply to those who claimed Molly was Irish, her granddaughter, Polly McLeister, gave spirited reply. She declared her grandmother to have been "as Dutch as sauer kraut, a native of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania Dutch parentage, born Oct. 13, 1744 and married to John Hays in 1769."

Having passed on all this information from Mr. Perrine to the companion who was so ready to cry, "Hokum!", and pointing out that in addition to the memorial at Freehold there's one at Carlisle, as well, we went on to disclose some facts concerning the second Molly, but not before disposing of that business of the well beside the tracks.

Ezekiel Perrine, born in 1807 at Perrineville, William Davison's grandfather who died in 1899 when he was ninety-two, told his grandson of the battlefield at Monmouth as it appeared in early days. There was an old Corduroy road that led through the swamps, perhaps the road that once led off at an angle near Tennent. But the road was closed and plowed under so that it's almost as forgotten as the school that once stood near the old church itself.

Calling it a well has been unfortunate. Naturally, when the name of Pitcher was evolved, a well went along with it. But even the caretaker at Tennent paused at his work among the graves of notables to assure us that there was no well at all, but a spring and a stream. The spring, according to Mr. Perrine, was a barrel "sunk in the edge of the bank near the Pennsylvania Railroad tunnel and Wemrock cut-off." Grandfather Ezekiel wrote his own pamphlets and in one of them he said that his father, William Davison, who was born in

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1758, saw the swollen bodies of the British dead the day after the battle. He, surely, should have known where the spring was.

However, as recently as 1937 there was considerable excitement over the search for "the original spring." A committee, headed by Leigh Cobb, county Y.M.C.A. secretary, sought to find it and while at work, were told that a farmer and his two sons had done some digging, uncovering it "in a meadow on the farm of Alexander Jasko, on the Freehold-Tennent highway, about a thousand feet south and west of the site now erroneously designated as Molly Pitcher's well."

Farmer Jasko and his two sons, Alexander, Jr., and Edward, were just about to give up, according to a contemporary account, when a clay bank crumbled in, exposing the spring. "When I bought this farm twenty-three years ago from John R. Parker," Mr. Jasko said at the time, "he told me it was a bargain because Molly Pitcher's spring was on it. Until the spring was filled in about fifteen years ago, the spot was always known as Molly Pitcher's water hole."

The farmer covered the spring when a tile drainage system was laid beneath the field. One thing was certain, it was pointed out, Molly carried water from a spring and not from a well. The site of the diggings which uncovered another rotted barrel from which the flow of water was a mere gurgle, was declared that of the third skirmish between American and British troops, near the old Bowne Reid homestead. Whether one is interested in such fine points or not, the location of the spring and its identification as a spring and not a well, brings up the matter of where the battle was fought, in relation to Old Tennent Church, all over again.

For Mr. Perrine, on the authority of his grandfather, seems to join the ranks of the debunkers when he declares the church was not a hospital at all during the Battle of Monmouth, as an inscription plainly declares. Even Alden Cottrell remarked one day that the church was too far away to have served any such purpose. When the Revolution was fought, methods of warfare were such that even a short distance made all the difference.

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Grandfather Ezekiel wrote that the church was definitely not used as a hospital and explained how that conclusion was built up. Walter Ker's house was used as a hospital, he said, but that was close by the place where the fight was hottest, apart from the temperature of the day. The Ker, or Kerr, house stood on Henry Perrine's farm where part of the bitter engagement centered in a hundred-acre field of barley.

"During the battle," Mr. Perrine had recorded, recalling what his grandfather wrote before him, "a straggler of the American army was seated on a low head-stone in the Mattison plot in front of the church. A stray cannon-ball from the British guns broke off one corner of the stone and mortally wounded the man. He was carried into the church and laid in the second pew on the right of the left aisle as you enter the church, where he died. Traces of blood were seen upon this pew for nearly fifty years. It is said that only one body was taken into the church that day and only one pew showed the blood stains. If Old Tennent Church had been used as a hospital, the blood stains would have showed on more pews than one, as there were no cushions on the pews in those days. . . ."

Thus the scene is changed. One pictures the curious chap perched on a tombstone, a grandstand seat from which to watch the conflict up the road. Along comes a bouncing cannon ball, catches the observer napping, knocks him half-way to Glory and smashes the stone itself. Others, perhaps watching the fight from a place of greater safety, run from cover and carry the wounded man inside. Then, from blood that would not be effaced through nearly three decades, the story grew and "a story once told and repeated for a hundred years allows variations," as Mr. Perrine says, "and it is then hard to change it to conform to the actual facts."

But what about the second Molly? What of Margaret Cochran, of Fort Washington?

Margaret was born November 12, 1751, in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, the only daughter of Robert Cochran, slain by hostile Indians in 1756. In the same raid Margaret's mother was taken captive and only a visit to an uncle prevented the

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child's being carried off, it was often said. Margaret stayed with her uncle, her mother's brother, until 1772, when she was married to John Corbin, of Virginia, who, like John Hays, enlisted under Francis Proctor. Margaret turned down any such thing as remaining at home while the war was on and followed her mate to camp, offering service as a nurse.

John Corbin was among the casualties at Fort Washington, on the upper end of Manhattan Island, Nov. 16, 1776. Margaret took over her husband's gun until she was felled by grapeshot that all but severed an arm and tore away part of her breast. She was paroled, with the surrender, and came back with other sick and wounded to Philadelphia. There she was enrolled as a member of the Invalid Regiment and in 1779 she was awarded a pension of thirty dollars.

When the Invalids were mustered out in 1783, Margaret Corbin, without a home, with tragedy at her heels as it had been since she was a girl, returned to the Hudson Valley to live among the friends she had made in the army. She became a servant at Swimtown, later Buttermilk Falls, and Highland Falls today. There she became famous for her flaming hair, her sharp eyes and piercing tongue, a shrill voice and shrewish temper, bred of pain from wounds that never had been treated by experts. In the village they saluted her as Captain Molly, although it was said that in the years before her death she became exceedingly careless in dress and person. About 1800, she died of gangrene and they buried her at Swimtown, under a cedar tree. Later the tree was replaced by an initialed stave and a century and a quarter after, when her bones were disinterred and put down again in the Post Cemetery at West Point, Daughters of the American Revolution gave her a monument.

It was but natural that history should confuse the two. Both had husbands named John, both showed courage under fire, both came from Pennsylvania. But the Molly Pitcher of Monmouth was not the girl of red hair, fiery temper, slovenly dress and a husband who fell dead at her feet. Captain Molly, of Monmouth, although life was unkind to the days that fol-

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lowed the war, had a much better time of it than Captain Molly, of Fort Washington. Today both sleep far from the scenes in which they gained fleeting fame, one in a grave at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the other in New York State, not far from the sound of martial tread perhaps headed for a more merciless conflict.

That last journey has its memories, apart from the well that was a spring, the hospital that had only one patient, the woman cannoneer who was two women and the man whose name bore relationship to much of the road we had traveled from the beginning. There were Perrines at Cranbury, at Hightstown, at Manalapan, over in the neighborhood of Red Tavern and, of course, at Perrineville. But there was added significance in the spelling of a name rudely carved on Mr. Perrine's back door near Grover's Mills.

The significance was mingled with something like finality. First, in meandering homeward, Jim Vandenberg led us to Little Africa, where Mr. Perrine had said it was, and where, even as Woodville, we could not find it before. It was just over the brow of a hill, Methodist Church and all, half a mile further than where we'd been with that broken spring, with none to remember the slaves who founded it.

Then we came back through Perrineville, not the Perrineville as it was in Mr. Perrine's days but with a church to recall the early labors of John Woodhull who founded it as part of his missionary work at Old Tennent. This was the fourth oldest church in the Presbytery. John Clark, who became pastor of the church at Allentown, was a pupil of Dr. Woodhull at Perrineville, in 1785. Perrines were there in the first church, they were there when a new church was erected in 1826, with a new name, Millstone replacing Upper Freehold. And when a third church came, the one that's still standing in spite of so many other changes, replacing the building that stood until the fire of 1873. Perrines were remembered in the bell, the hymnbooks and the Bible for the pulpit.

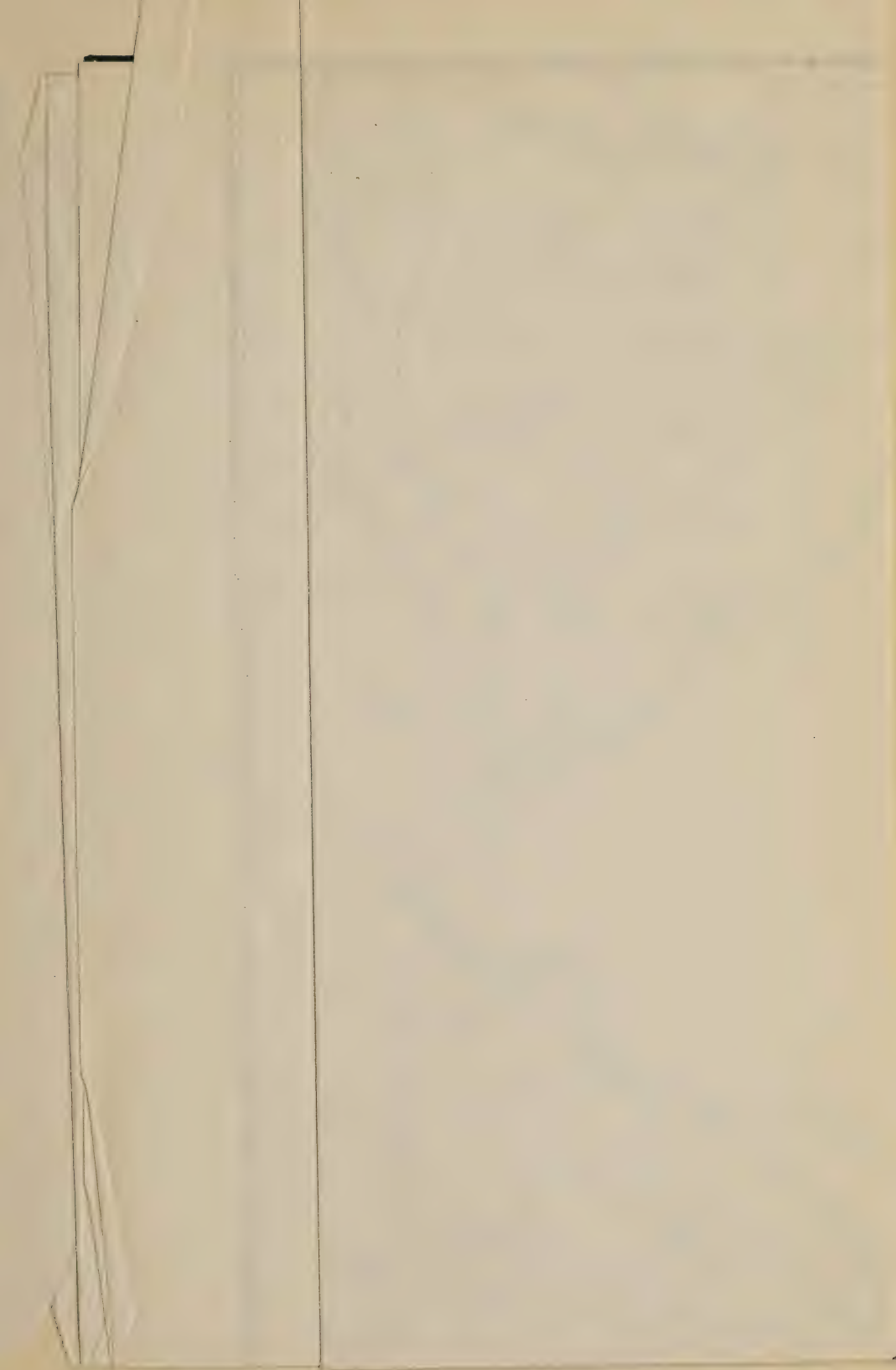
Then the pamphlet William Davison Perrine had written on his own family reached out and explained something, told

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us that the psychologists were right, that there was something appropriate in even "an immigrant" getting a thrill from old New Jersey. For the father who brought us to New Jersey had come, when he was a youth, from Old Jersey, the tiny island in the English Channel for which New Jersey was named. And, as the pamphleteer pointed out, the Perrines were Perrins, Perrins who "as early as 1440 were represented on the old pedigree chart of families long domiciled on the Islands of Jersey and Guernsey."

Obviously the ghost of Daniel Perrin, 2nd, the Huguenot who had come from Old Jersey to Staten Island in 1665, and whose children had come over to the Midlands of New Jersey, to Matchaponix, Perrineville and Old Tennent, in the early 1700's, had made us feel at home for ever so long.

THE END



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THE END



A MAP OF
SOME OLD, AND OTHER
"FORGOTTEN TOWNS"
OF
SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY.

PRINTED BY
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OCT. 24, 1938

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